Esquire
LOVE YOUR PARENTS, HATE THEIR POLITICS
BY GARY SHTEYNGART
HOW WE DRESS NOW
REAL GUYS IN THEIR REAL CLOTHES
keanu Reeves
KNOWS THE SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE
JUST DO IT
THE RELUCTANT MAN'S GUIDE TO THERAPY
THE BEST
New Restaurants in America
THE BEST
Bourbons Under $40

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About Love

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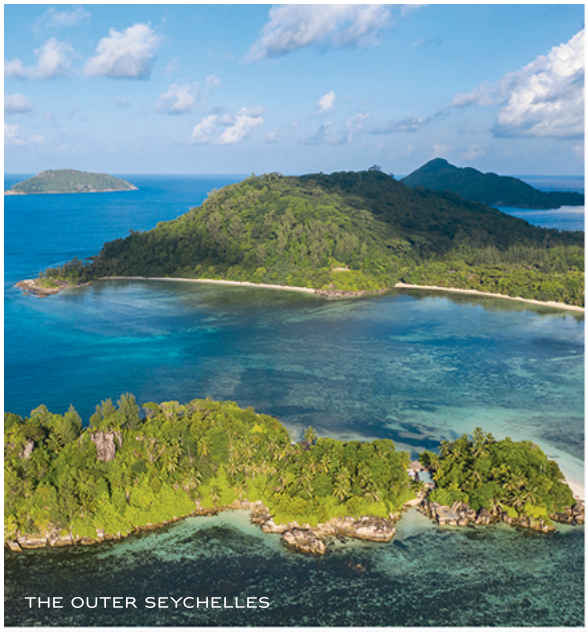
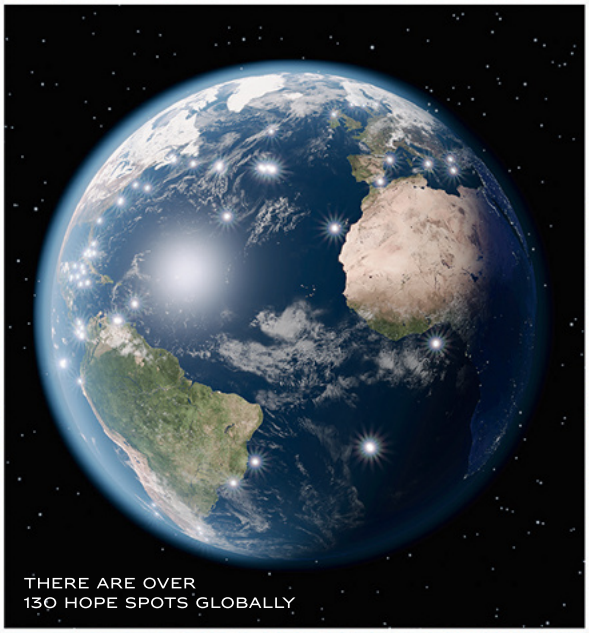


THE OUTER SEYCHELLES

AZORES ARCHIPELAGO, PORTUGAL

FLORIDA GULF
COASTLINE,
UNITED STATES

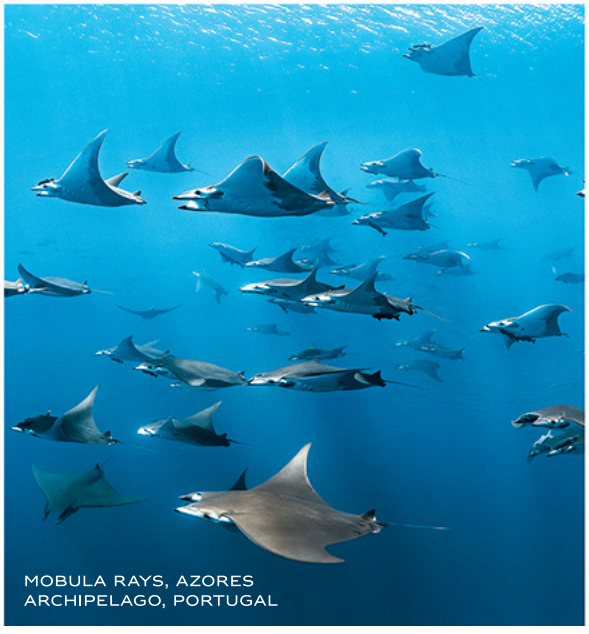
SYLVIA EARLE EXPLORES
COCOS ISLAND, COSTA RICA



THERE ARE OVER
130 HOPE SPOTS GLOBALLY

SYLVIA EARLE WITH
VOLUNTEERS, THE
OUTER SEYCHELLES

GREAT BARRIER REEF, AUSTRALIA



MOBULA RAYS, AZORES
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SEA LION,
GALAPAGOS,
ECUADOR

ON OUR WATCH

Hope can now be spotted across all our planet's seas and oceans. Sites are made into aquatic havens by local communities, to safeguard the richness and diversity of the ecosystems they depend on. Sylvia Earle's invaluable experience as an explorer and marine biologist continues to help further their goal, through her organization, Mission Blue. Together, they have created over 130 Hope Spots and counting. Carrying a message of hope for generations to come. It is that vision, that dedication to a perpetual planet, which we are proud to stand by.
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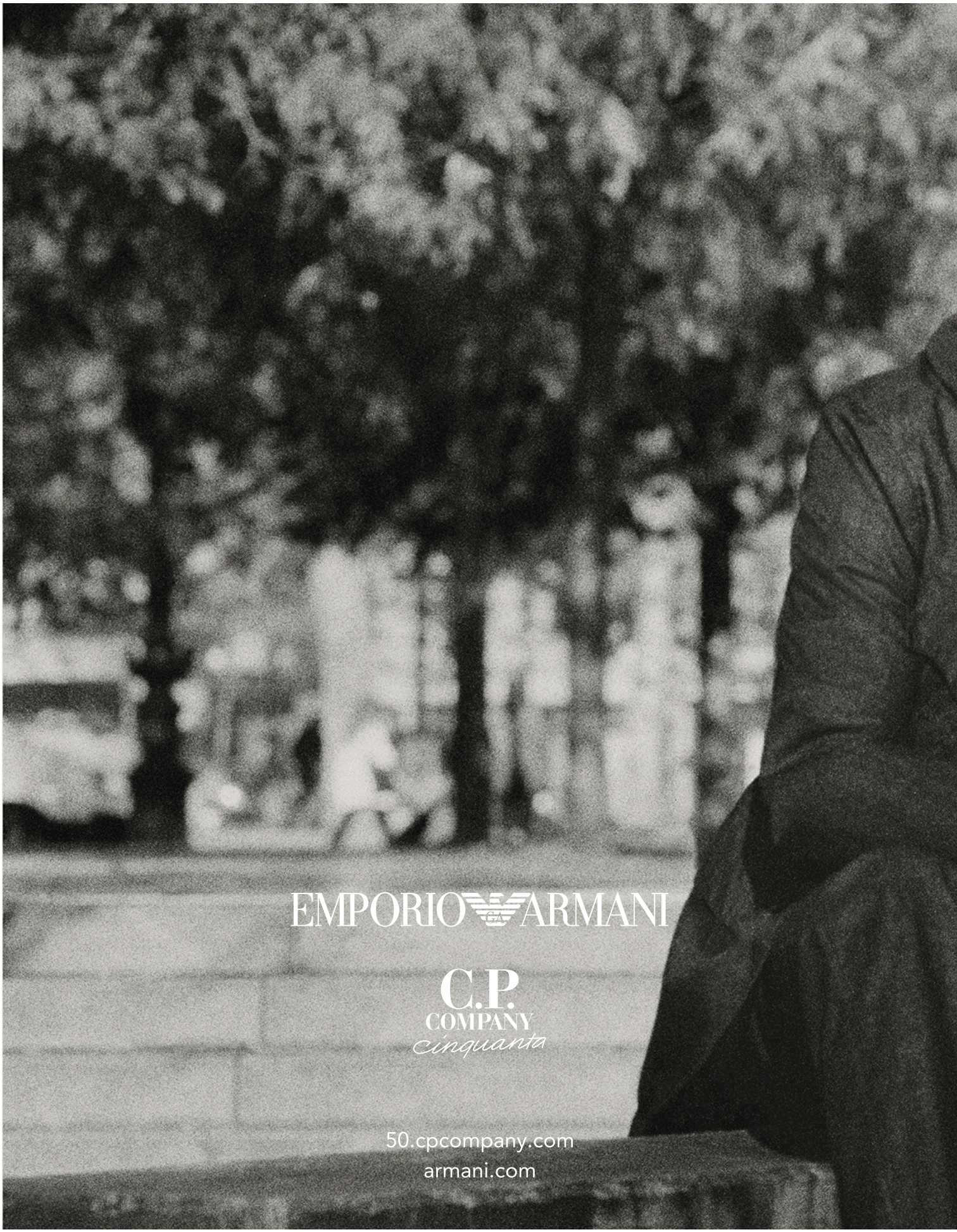
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"It's weird going back through these," Reeves says, scrolling back in time through texts from Carrie-Anne Moss. "This is very on-point for *Matrix Resurrections*." PAGE 70

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The first half of a beer.

JACKET BY **DOLCE & GABBANA.**

NATHANIEL GOLDBERG

ON THE COVER

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Published at 300 West Fifty-seventh Street, New York, NY 10019-3797. ® www.esquire.com. Printed in the U. S. A.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GIA COPPOLA

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DIOR

Big Acts of Storytelling

IN 2013, WHEN I WAS A REPORTER FOR THE magazine *Ad Age*, I had occasion to interview David Granger, who at the time was three quarters of the way into his nineteen-year tenure as Esquire's editor in chief. He characterized the feature stories on which Esquire built its reputation—deeply reported, vibrantly written, wholly immersive—as "big acts of storytelling." The phrase has stuck with me, and today I use it frequently when talking about Esquire articles, past and present, because big acts of storytelling have been part of the magazine since its inception.

Our first issue, published in September 1933, opened with a page called "Backstage with Esquire," our take on the contributors' page. The column contained a note about big-act storyteller Ernest Hemingway's contribution: "For those of you who have waistlines, we wish that Mr. Hemingway had included, in his account of marlin fishing, the fact that he lost 26 pounds during the three months he spent fishing the Cuban Coast." "Backstage" appeared in each issue for the next fifty-five years and, along with letters to the editor, consisted of glimpses behind the scenes of magazine making.

I've revived that column for this (and only this) issue but with my own spin. While you'll find big acts of storytelling in the traditional mold—Jesse Ellison's dispatch on the bizarre killing of a lobsterman on a remote island off the coast of Maine (page 110); novelist Gary Shteyngart's hilarious, moving essay about loving his parents while hating their politics (page 43)—I'll instead peel back the curtain on three stories that prove that big acts of storytelling aren't limited to reported features by best-selling authors. The big-act spirit suffuses every page of the magazine.

"THE BEST NEW RESTAURANTS IN AMERICA"

Lists are everywhere, because everyone likes them. They are easy to consume, but they—the good ones, anyway—are *not* easy to compile. For this year's "Best New Restaurants" (page 53), now in its thirty-eighth year, a four-person team led by lifestyle director Kevin Sintumuang spent a year traveling across the country, eating and drinking at hundreds of restaurants, all on Esquire's dime. (Sweet gig.) They applied as much journalistic rigor as we would to, say, an investigation into corruption in a small-city police department—as we did for a story in the March 2021 issue—to find the most exciting places to dine in America. And the writing sparkles. "The very best restaurants are like winning a ticket to another place, another time," Sintumuang writes. "To the past and the future—and sometimes both at once."

"KEANU REEVES WTF"

Take another look at this month's cover, featuring Keanu Reeves. Squint and you'll see that we shot him in Paris, on his day off from filming *John Wick: Chapter 4*. The photographer, Nathaniel Goldberg, who lives in Paris, has had a storied career shooting celebrities; the woman who styled Reeves, Anastasia Barbieri, is a legend in her own right. Before each cover shoot, I ask the creative team to capture the most iconic images of an already very photographed celebrity; before the first interview, I ask the writer to produce the definitive profile. My aim is to offer you, our readers, a story unlike any you've seen or read about this person before. After just a few hours of conversation with the famously private Reeves, Ryan D'Agostino, editorial director of projects for our parent company, Hearst, uncovered the secret of what makes the actor so damn likable. Read the revelatory profile on page 70.

"HOW WE DRESS NOW"

Style is in Esquire's DNA; that first-ever issue included a story called "A Few Words in Praise of the Iron Hat." Typically, we put the clothes we love on celebrities like Reeves, or on models. This month, we're continuing with a different approach, a franchise spearheaded by creative director Nick Sullivan, that we call "How We Dress Now," in which real guys wear their real clothes. Fashion associate Rashad Minnick scouted the talent, poring through recommendations, scouring Instagram, and stopping strangers on the street. Then, in the Esquire offices, he assembled a giant mood board with snapshots of all of the very stylish men he'd found. Narrowing it down to the twelve guys you'll see starting on page 84 required as much debate as selecting the best new restaurants did. This franchise won't be appearing in just the U.S. edition of Esquire; we've partnered with eight of our counterparts around the world, including the British, German, Italian, and Spanish editions, which will each feature real guys from that country. In January, at the world's premier menswear event, Pitti Uomo, editors from Esquire's international editions will gather for an exhibition of the photos from each one's take on "How We Dress Now." If you happen to be in Florence, stop by and say hello. If you arrive in your nattiest threads, you might just become part of our latest, but definitely not last, big act of storytelling.

—Michael Sebastian

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALLIE HOLLOWAY

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CARRERA

"I've learned not to take time for granted. What drives me is knowing that the clock is ticking."

Ryan Gosling

Maison Francis Kurkdjian Paris

Paris as a gift

Francis Kurkdjian

blueprint

SIMONIN CUM DO

The Worst Idea Wins

We have surrendered our good taste to the algorithm while empowering our gut to make decisions that should be left to science. There's no way this will end well.

IN A RECENT RAGE CLIP du jour, a furious young dad in a parked car bellows into his phone camera about California's Covid-vaccine mandate. "For the kids to go back to school, they have to be fucking vaccinated," he shrieks, tommy-gunning his screen with spittle. "Are you fucking kidding me?" Then he turns one drawn-out, modern-dance *"FUUUUUUCK"* into a quivering warning for all liberals to unfollow him. This is 43 excruciating seconds of tough-guy posturing on TikTok, the app featuring children recording themselves dancing to "Fancy Like." He's not scary, but this is: TikTok's algorithm—the nicotine behind the app's addictiveness—fed his rage to millions. Some saw it and thought: *Now, there's a patriot.* And it confirmed their hunch, even as the bodies piled up, that Covid can be bullied and patrioted away.

It's taken a couple decades to reach this point, at which we surrender vast portions of our continuing education to the algorithm. At the same time, we shout down the real-life experts whose advice contradicts our hunches. In anatomical terms: The head and the gut have pulled a *Freaky Friday,* and we need them to swap back fast or else we'll wind up dead. Or worse: dull.

The shift started breezily enough. In 2003, the journalist Michael Lewis published *Moneyball,* one of very few books about statistics to have become a Brad Pitt movie. In both, Oakland A's manager Billy Beane replaces the hunches of his veteran talent

scouts with data, which results in a better, cheaper team. Fine for baseball, but over time the tech giants—Facebook, Google, Amazon, Quibi—cut human curation out of the equation, creating complex algorithms that determine the news, music, and TV we consumed.

Tragically, now the machines make us mixtapes. Behold my Spotify Discover Weekly playlist, where advanced data analysis, machine learning, and let's say algebra come together to deliver new music I will find sort of pleasant. The algorithm knows the jangly guitar tone I gravitate toward, the plaintive vocal I tend to enjoy. It serves me what I like, but I never fall in love. The songs are scientifically skip-proof, but they flit in one ear and out the other. As well as the algorithm knows my behavior, it doesn't know me. It doesn't know how I'll react to the marketing of the artist, or whether I'll be attracted to the drummer, or any of the million ineffable qualities that connect a person to music. It can't be the friend who gives you a Superchunk record on a hunch, thereby changing your life forever.

NOW THE MACHINES MAKE US MIXTAPES. Behold my SPOTIFY DISCOVER WEEKLY PLAYLIST, where DATA ANALYSIS, MACHINE LEARNING, and LET'S SAY ALGEBRA combine to deliver new music I'll find SORT OF PLEASANT.

It cannot set you up for self-discovery. It just gives you more of what it knows you like—be it bro country or news posts that make you feel like an immunologist because you don't want to wear a mask—and pushes you to be more of who it knows you are. It can't change you. You won't evolve. The machine won't do its job as efficiently if you do.

So it makes sense that we launched a revolt against the data. In the face of major global problems, we've chosen to trust our hunches over the facts. We say, "Nearly every climate scientist concludes that climate change is real, man-made, and certain to devastate the planet unless we take action right the fuck now, but on the other hand, it's nice out." We're desperate for agency, so we let our gut lead us where we already wanted to go. The algorithm does what it does, reinforcing those bad ideas by showing us posts expressing the same feeling, and then there we are. Satisfied and immovable, in a feedback loop to hell.

I won't forget the last hunch I really fell for. In mid-March 2020, we were gathered at a bar, just beginning to wonder if we should be gathering at a bar. Things looked grim, so we were susceptible to the gut feelings of the confident. "It'll be over by early May," my friend Brian said, "and it'll just look like a bad flu year."

We all agreed, because it felt good to agree. *There, see? Brian thinks everything is going to work out.* It was easy then to ignore the tiny voice in my head telling me what I didn't want to hear: These are not the words of an immunologist, based on data, historical parallels, and modeling; this is the hunch of a guy who writes advertising copy for Count Chocula.

Good hunches, like book recommendations and blind dates, create serendipity and inspire growth: *Something makes me think you'll like this.* But hunches get sketchy when they reject data and common sense: *He won't be any worse than Hillary.* Ultimately, the hunch that we won't be here for the long-term consequences of our snap decisions is probably correct.

The man in the viral video isn't really raging about vaccines or liberals; if his kids are in school, they've gotten a dozen mandated shots. These aren't his enemies; they're just where the news algorithm directed his anger. He was already furious, because he's among the millions of Americans who had a hunch—Covid won't be a big deal—and reality crashed into it like a freight train hitting a Smart car. He wanted to go from his gut and make his own rules, like *Die Hard*'s John McClane, and now has to follow the orders of Young Sheldon.

In *Freaky Friday,* selflessness gets Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsay Lohan back into their rightful bodies; they come to understand each other's strengths and their own limitations. And so it can be here. There is room for both your hunch and all the raw data analyzed by experts. Let your hunches do what they're qualified to do, like compel you to reach out to that friend who you think may need to talk. Let the CDC do what it can: assure you that a vaccine is the quickest way back to a world we recognize.

And for God's sake, go make someone a playlist on Spotify.

The 5 Wrongest Hunches
IN AMERICAN HISTORY

Gut instincts are kind of our thing—for better and, often, for worse

1865

"Abe, you're gonna love *Our American Cousin.*"

It's unclear who suggested President Lincoln go to the theater on April 14, but whoever recommended the idea wasn't necessarily wrong. *Our American Cousin* was a hit comedy that had been running in various cities for seven years, and Lincoln was said to be laughing through much of it. It was the timing of that hunch that proved deeply unfortunate.

1985

"What we should do with the most popular soft drink in the history of the world is change it."

The introduction of New Coke came with assurances from Coca-Cola executives that people would adopt the new formula. America rebelled against it immediately, without even rudimentary social media to foment the unrest. Three months later, the old Coke was reintroduced as Coca-Cola Classic.

EARLY 1990s

"My next role should be something more adult, and I have found just the thing."

After *Saved by the Bell* went away in 1993, Elizabeth Berkley took the starring role in *Showgirls,* the first big-budget movie to earn an NC-17 rating. Her decision, she later said, was pure instinct. (Apparently, so was the studio's; MGM advanced Joe Eszterhas $2 million for the script, based on a note he wrote on a cocktail napkin.) It bombed, and Berkley's career stalled. It's since become a cult classic, so I have a hunch she may have been playing the long game.

EARLY 2000s

"The housing market will expand forever!"

During the Bush years, a number of smart, seemingly well-informed people not only said there was no housing bubble—New York Federal Reserve Bank: "Our analysis reveals little evidence of a housing bubble"—but even joked about it, like *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman, who wrote in 2002, "Alan Greenspan needs to create a housing bubble to replace the Nasdaq bubble." They ignored one of the first hard facts a child learns: Bubbles pop.

2015

"You're not going to be able to insult your way to the presidency."

Jeb Bush said this to Donald Trump. Out loud. What's even more shocking from today's perspective is how true it felt.

ENGINEERED TO A HIGHER STANDARD—THE HUMAN STANDARD
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Down the Middle

The most exciting new whiskeys just might be the bargains. Here's how to build a middle shelf that matters. **BY KEVIN SINTUMUANG**

WE ALL WANT A TOP SHELF that wows. But without a strong middle shelf of $40-and-under bottles that you can pour without a second thought, you just have a trophy case instead of something you actually live with. Those solid, everyday go-tos make the special stuff just that, special, and not the bottle you deplete after a few weeks of after-work drams. This doesn't mean buying obvious big brands. Recently, in an effort to get price-conscious younger drinkers away from their White Claw, distillers of middle-shelf whiskeys have brought about a renaissance worthy of more adoration. While there have been values punching above their price point for years, like Rittenhouse and Buffalo Trace, these new bottles of revived old styles or innovations offer some genuine delight and just might keep those top-shelf bottles dusty a little longer. Plus, a little more whiskey and a little less spiked seltzer is probably a good thing.

Dewar's Japanese Smooth

$25 *(40% ABV)*

Take a honeylike Scotch like Dewar's and age it in Japanese mizunara casks and you get what the label advertises: smooth. Try it as a highball or a just-complex-enough sipper.

Old Tub

$23 *(50% ABV)*

Once the original flagship whiskey from Beam, this unfiltered, big-flavored yet highly drinkable goodness is now available across the country for the price of a fancy cocktail.

Maker's Mark 101

$39 *(50.5% ABV)*

Wheated bourbons like Maker's are known for their gentleness, but when you bump the proof up to 101, it becomes a more robust player with bigger vanilla and spice.

Ezra Brooks 99

$25 *(49.5% ABV)*

A prototypical bourbon with vanilla, caramel, brown sugar, and a hint of peanuts. It's not unlike a candy bar, in a good way.

Compass Box Glasgow Blend

$38 *(43% ABV)*

Snobs may scoff at blends, but this one will convince them otherwise. About 62 percent is single malt, sure, but it's the artful sherry and smoky playfulness that make it a standout.

Great Jones Bourbon

$40 *(43% ABV)*

From Manhattan's first (legal) distillery since Prohibition is a whiskey on the lighter, sweeter side, with just a hint of spice and oak.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JANELLE JONES (LEFT)

SO, WHAT'S A $60,000 WHISKY LIKE?

Whisky that costs as much as a BMW 5 Series? Sounds intimidating. Will a sip of such an extravagant elixir mean you can never appreciate the cheap stuff again? Perhaps, but that's a chance you should be willing to take. So when I found myself sampling the $60,000 Yamazaki 55, I did my best to consider it as I would any dram, because old and expensive doesn't necessarily translate to good. Turns out this extra-mature Japanese single malt was quite special, with notes of mango, caramel, and cotton candy, and a touch of spice. Just 100 bottles were released globally, so most of us will have to experience Yamazaki 55 vicariously. But drinking this rarity was a reminder to slow down and appreciate my favorite bottles. And that's a skill worth cultivating, even with whisky that's a fraction of the price. —Jonah Flicker

PROP STYLING: JAY JANSEN

Keep Going Forward

PROSPEX

140th Anniversary SEIKO

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Oceanic Society

SEIKO U.S. SPECIAL EDITION

Seiko Prospex is an official sponsor of Oceanic Society, America's first ocean conservation non-profit, and its global work to study and protect endangered sea turtles. The alliance continues Seiko's long commitment to supporting the conservation and exploration of the world's marine environment.

SEIKO

SINCE 1881

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
SEIKOLUXE.COM

Surrender Your Home to the Internet

Not every household device needs to be connected to the Internet, right? Some things are better analog. Why should your lamp or toaster oven sync up with an app? Ridiculous! Or is it? What if—and hear us out—you give yourself over entirely to the Internet of Things. Resistance is futile. The machines won. Connect everything. Enjoy the benefits. It will change your life, probably for the better. Here are five products that are so smart and beautifully designed you won't mind giving them your data. **BY DANIEL DUMAS**

1. TOVALA SMART OVEN
Most toaster ovens make toast. The Tovala makes meals. It does this with a smartphone app but also through the incorporation of steam-cooking technology, which ensures food emerges with the perfect balance of tender crispiness. *$299; tovala.com*

2. SAMSUNG JET BOT AI+ ROBOT VACUUM
Does your robotic vacuum choke on your iPhone charger? This one uses lidar and object-recognition sensors to scan the interior of your household, so it won't suck up any clothes or small pets. *$1,299; samsung.com*

3. TIDBYT DISPLAY
Addicted to your phone? Maybe try a Tidbyt, a retro display that shows anything from calendar entries to crypto prices to Spotify playlists on a colorful, Lite Brite–like screen. *$179; buy.tidbyt.com*

4. AMAZON SMART SOAP DISPENSER
The CDC recommends washing your hands for a full 20 seconds to fully annihilate germs. To help pass the time, this Internet-connected soap dispenser illuminates for 20 seconds to indicate when your paws are clean and can also sync with an Echo to play music or even tell you jokes. *$55; amazon.com*

5. IKEA SYMFONISK SPEAKER LAMP WITH WIFI
Beautiful lamp + connected speaker = Ikea's Symfonisk. This all-in-one sound system and light source is WiFi-connected, so not only can it be controlled from your smartphone but different speakers can play different music in different parts of the house. Yes, that means Barry White in the bedroom and Kraftwerk in the kitchen. *$179 with glass shade; ikea.com*

PROP STYLING: JAY JANSEN

PHOTOGRAPH BY JANELLE JONES

HOLIDAY MUST-HAVE

PRESENTED BY CHANTECAILLE

Whether or not you're still solely WFH, endless on-camera meetings over the past two years have probably got you seeing yourself in a whole new light. In fact, the words "skincare regimen" may have even entered your lexicon. And just one well-chosen product can make a dramatic improvement in how your skin looks. The powerful plant extracts in Chantecaille Anti-Pollution Mattifying Cream minimize the appearance of pores, eliminate shine, and guard skin against damaging pollution (both the stuff outside and the kind emanating from your computer screen). Keep a tube next to your razor and consider it another morning must.

CHANTECAILLE
Anti-Pollution Mattifying Cream (1.3 fl. oz.), $98.
chantecaille.com

PHOTOGRAPHER: JEFFREY WESTBROOK/STUDIO D. STYLIST: MIAKO KATOH.

THE WEIRD AND WONDERFUL OF '21

From a haunting take on *Macbeth* to otherworldly electric blues to the most surreal show in decades, fittingly, the best culture of the year ran deep

THE BEST **TV SHOW** OF 2021

SQUID GAME

Even though *Squid Game* ruined cookies and tracksuits, we can thank the South Korean thriller for being the best and bloodiest series this year. Sure, the premise—down-on-their-luck types compete in fatal childhood games with a fortune at stake—triggers *Hunger Games* flashbacks. But the show offers a ruthless critique of a society that pits its lower classes against one another—and downs a glass of whiskey in a bedazzled panther mask while doing it. Thanks to dozens of moments, like the tug-of-war match, that kept us up for nights, as well as Lee Jung-jae's bighearted portrayal of the hero we've been waiting for, *Squid Game* is a masterpiece. Now, which body parts must we sign away to get a second season? —BRADY LANGMANN

MOST UNDERRATED:
Once Upon a Time in Queens

THE BEST **BOOK** OF 2021

The Other Black Girl

BY ZAKIYA DALILA HARRIS

This blistering thriller about Nella, an ambitious editorial assistant who has been the lone Black employee at Wagner Books, is *Get Out* meets *The Devil Wears Prada*. The arrival of Hazel, another Black editorial assistant, looks like the answer to Nella's prayers—but Hazel isn't the ally she seems. When Nella begins to receive threatening anonymous notes, she immediately suspects Hazel. The truth is far more sinister, exposing Nella to a dangerous conspiracy. It's a pulse-quickening page-turner that not only entertains but also exposes the racism—both obvious and subtle—of the overwhelmingly white publishing world. Just below the surface of Zakiya Dalila Harris's novel is a searing indictment of the hollow-hearted diversity efforts that are so popular in corporate America. —ADRIENNE WESTENFELD

MOST UNDERRATED:
Palmares, BY GAYL JONES

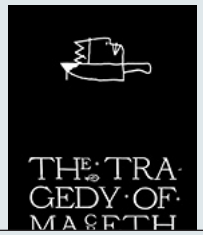
THE BEST **FILM** OF 2021

THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH

DIRECTED BY JOEL COEN

Working for the first time without brother and creative partner Ethan, Joel Coen breathes thrilling life into one of Shakespeare's classics. With Frances McDormand as original femme fatale Lady Macbeth and Denzel Washington as her self-destructive husband, the movie creates a fearsome interplay between the two, but despite commanding performances, it's Coen who proves the ultimate star. Shooting in black and white amid brutalist architecture and enveloping fog, he imagines his tale in abstract terms, full of angled and circular visual lines and haunting silhouettes. Such imagery speaks to the distress of his characters and lends the drama a contemporary edge, enhancing the timeliness of its themes of ambition, treachery, and the cruel hand of fate. It's both a testament to the Bard's continuing greatness and confirmation of Coen's own formidable artistry. It's also a damn good movie. —NICK SCHAGER

MOST UNDERRATED:
About Endlessness,
DIRECTED BY ROY ANDERSSON



THE BEST **ALBUM** OF 2021

Afrique Victime

BY MDOU MOCTAR

The Hendrix of the Sahara! The Van Halen of the desert! You'll find plenty of sparkling comparisons for the 37-year-old self-taught guitarist Mdou Moctar, a native of Niger and member of the seminomadic Tuareg people. But his playing—left-handed and joyously wild—is entirely his own. Though his 2019 LP, *Ilana: The Creator,* is what catapulted him onto the global stage, it's his 2021 outing for which he'll be remembered. It's an incandescent call to arms—an argument of opposition to colonialism and its lasting effects in his home region. Also, it flat-out cooks. Psych stylings meet hypnotic, call-and-response Tamasheq chanting; jazzy improvisations meet searing soul. Don't waste too much time trying to make sense of the dazzling blend. Just play it loud. —MADISON VAIN

MOST UNDERRATED:
Encore, BY WANDA JACKSON

THE CREATORS' PICKS

Zakiya Dalila Harris's favorite book of '21
The Final Revival of Opal & Nev, by Dawnie Walton

"Just the premise alone—an oral history of a fictional interracial rock 'n' roll duo coming up in the '70s—pulled me in. But Walton's dynamic writing style and complex cast of characters kept me turning the pages. If you love music or simply love a well-crafted, intimate read, this book is for you."

Mdou Moctar bassist Mikey Coltun's favorite album of '21
Qalaq, by Jerusalem in My Heart

"*Qalaq* is a beautiful record. The music is in your face and powerful, and you can feel the violence Lebanon has endured the last few years. I can't recommend it enough."

COURTESY NETFLIX (*SQUID GAME*). COURTESY PUBLISHER (BOOK COVER). COURTESY A24 (*MACBETH*).

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"THERE IS A BEAUTY THAT REMAINS WITH US AFTER WE'VE STOPPED LOOKING."

CORY RICHARDS,
PHOTOGRAPHER AND EXPLORER, WEARS THE
VACHERON CONSTANTIN OVERSEAS.

VACHERON CONSTANTIN
GENÈVE

ONE OF
NOT MANY.

A Parka *with* Pedigree

C. P. Company's Mille Miglia jacket is inspired by a harrowing road race, but that doesn't mean you can't wear it on your next coffee run

LA MILLE GOGGLE JACKET ($1,698) BY **C. P. COMPANY.**

WANT TO UNDERSTAND THE GENESIS OF TODAY'S STREET STYLE? Look to C. P. Company, the Italian brand celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Founded by Massimo Osti, C. P., as it's lovingly known to fans, took the functional and elevated it to high fashion via technical materials, tailored fits, and innovative wash treatments. Sound familiar? One of Osti's most iconic designs for the brand is this, the Mille Miglia jacket, a short parka inspired by and named after the classic and often deadly annual sports-car race down and back up the spine of Italy. It comes with goggles built into the detachable hood and a window on the left sleeve so you can read your watch while driving. New iterations of the Mille jacket arrive each season at C. P., now with Osti's son Lorenzo at the helm. Alongside them this winter is the new book *C. P. Company 971-021*, which is full of vintage versions of the Mille that look just as fresh as the new. *–Nick Sullivan*

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY WESTBROOK

PROP STYLING: LIZ DE SOUSA

Where It's Never Gone Before

Omega's fan favorite Speedmaster gets a whole new look **BY NICK SULLIVAN**

SPEEDMASTER CHRONOSCOPE ($8,600) BY **OMEGA.**

IT'S NOT EASY TINKERING with an icon. The steel Omega Speedmaster—aka the Moonwatch, as in the one NASA astronauts wore on the Apollo missions—is an epic piece recognizable at ten paces. It belongs in any collection of historic watches. Changes to the look of it have been minimal and made only after much deliberation. All of which makes the 43mm Speedmaster Chronoscope, out now, something of a quantum departure.

The Chronoscope is available in six versions in steel and one in gold, including a panda dial (silver with black subdials), a blue dial, and, most striking of all, an all-silver dial with blue hands. Then there's the unmissable set of three concentric circles emanating from the center; this element makes the watch truly compelling.

Put simply, a chronoscope is a graphic measuring device that uses the passing of time to compute all sorts of interesting data. It combines three different tools. A telemeter measures your distance from a given event using the speed of sound. (You see a lightning strike, for instance, and start the chronograph. When you hear thunder, you stop it. The telemeter will show you how far away the bad weather is.) A more standard tachymeter measures speed over a known distance. (You track the time for a one-mile lap in a race, and it shows you the car's speed.) And a pulsometer tells you your heart rate. (You start the chronometer, count 30 beats, stop it, and check your BPM.)

Back in the '40s, when not much else could do the math, such functions were crammed into smaller sports watches. Nowadays, you've got more room to house all that utility. Of course, you could probably do all this on your phone, too. But where's the fun in that?

STYLING: LIZ DESOUSA

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY WESTBROOK

STREET STYLE

SKECHERS.COM

The author, on this page and the next, showing off some of the season's best options.

Damn, That's a Good Coat

Street-style savant **Josh Peskowitz** explores the implications—personal, practical, and philosophical—of really great outerwear

IF YOU LIVE IN New York City, like me, your coat is your car. The same goes for any other town reliant on public transport (and feet). Cars protect you. So do coats. Cars say a lot about their drivers, and coats do the same for their wearers. But coats can change with your mood, and so I like to experiment with mine. That's one reason I launched a project on Instagram called the Coat Chronicles—a way to share my adventures in outerwear with the world.

The other reason is that this isn't just a way of life; it's how I make my living. Over the years, I've worked as a stylist, a consultant, a fashion director, and a buyer for stores big and small. These jobs bring you into contact with a lot of coats. So I try them on. Some are coats I actually want to buy for my various establishments, and some are just for fun. Sometimes the distinction is minimal. Either way, I snap a photo for the Coat Chronicles and think about how these new discoveries might inspire me to change up my own rotation. Because I do like to change it up. Maybe it's a classic camel topcoat one day and an oversized, double-breasted designer offering the next. Maybe it's a puffer for the weekend and something tweedy for the workweek. The vibe can change—should change—according to how I'm feeling.

Think of it like music. I like classic rock just as much as I like hip-

ABOVE: COAT ($2,750) BY **DRIES VAN NOTEN.** LEFT: SHEARLING PARKA ($8,825) BY **ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA.**

STYLING: RASHAD MINNICK. GROOMING: KOJI ICHIKAWA FOR THE CLUB NEW YORK USING LAICALE.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL DORSA

JAEGER-LECOULTRE

REVERSO
TRIBUTE

Jaeger-LeCoultre Boutiques
New York – The Forum Shops – South Coast Plaza – Beverly Hills – Yorkdale Shopping Centre

hop. Why stick to just one? And if you're fully into new wave, does that mean you absolutely can't like experimental jazz? If you dig something that's a little different from your norm, why not push it a bit? Enthusiasm tends to breed more enthusiasm. Or, put another way: Getting a really good coat tends to lead to wanting another really good coat.

Maybe you run hot. Maybe you'll never give up the trusty parka that you wear every day. All good. It doesn't have to be coats. It could be sweaters or trousers or sneakers or hats. (More on that last one on the right-hand side of this page.) The trick is finding that element of your wardrobe that you're most drawn to—just open up your closet and see what type of garment you've got more of than anything else, because that's probably it—and feeling emboldened to have fun with it. Other animals have feathers or stripes or bioluminescence to show who they are. Humans have clothes. And unlike a leopard, we change our spots as easily as we can switch from listening to *Exile on Main St.* to *The Infamous.*

NEAR RIGHT, FROM TOP: ROBE COAT ($650) BY **BTFL STUDIO;** COAT ($5,100) BY **PRADA;** MORNING COAT ($1,624) BY **4SDESIGNS.** FAR RIGHT, FROM TOP: BEANIE HATS BY **BEGG X CO, GABRIELA HEARST, COS,** AND **ALEX MILL.**

CAP IT OFF

Is there anything about the beanie we could tell you that you don't already know? Aside from the fact that it's a great air-travel companion—pillow or eye shade, take your pick!—probably not. So instead of belaboring the point, here's a reminder that a stash of beanies, from **Begg x Co** or any of the makers on this page, is a very good thing to have.

JEFFREY WESTBROOK (BEANIES). STYLING: LIZ DESOUSA.

PROMOTION

trust your taste

Afterall, you know it's impeccable. These editor-backed picks are made to meet your standards.

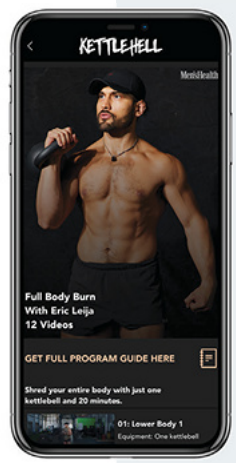
MORE MUSCLE, LESS FAT, TONS OF ENERGY
Men's Health
Plant-Based Eating
(THE DIET THAT CAN INCLUDE MEAT)
100+ EASY RECIPES
FOREWORD BY BRIAN ST. PIERRE, M.S., R.D., C.S.C.S.
INTRODUCTION BY PAUL KITA FOOD & NUTRITION EDITOR, MEN'S HEALTH

PLANT-BASED EATING GUIDE

This definitive guide to going plant-based includes 100+ recipes packed with all the nutrition and energy to fuel great workouts and look amazing. *menshealth.com/plantbasedcookbook*

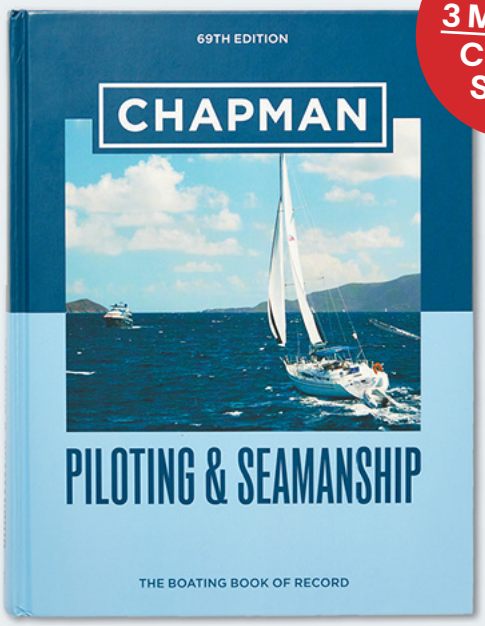
BLUETOOTH-ENABLED ROWING MACHINE

Track your progress as you power through full-body rowing workouts and sync to studio classes through your MyCloudFitness App. *menshealth.com/WHMHFitness*



KETTLEHELL ON ALL OUT STUDIO

With hundreds of streaming workouts, an All Out Studio membership is your ticket to sculpting an incredible body—just add a kettlebell. *menshealth.com/AOS*

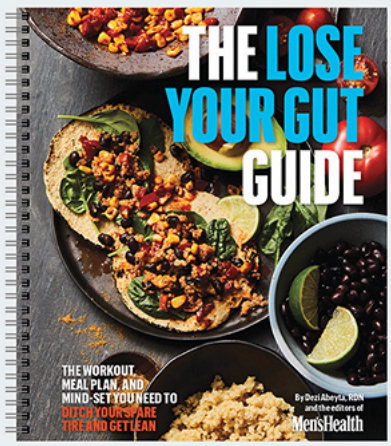


CHAPMAN PILOTING

Set sail with the essential boating guide recommended by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, newly updated for its 69th edition with everything a boater needs to know. *esquire.com/chapmanbook*

ESQUIRE MEN'S JEWELRY

Elevate your look with our exclusive new line of jewelry. From rings to necklaces to bracelets, every piece is guaranteed to make a statement. *esquire.com/mensjewelry*


THE LOSE YOUR GUT GUIDE
THE WORKOUT, MEAL PLAN, AND MIND-SET YOU NEED TO DITCH YOUR SPARE TIRE AND GET LEAN
By Dezi Abeyta, RDN and the editors of Men's Health

THE LOSE YOUR GUT GUIDE

Look as great as you feel with an expert-designed workout program and meal plan tailored to getting lean and boosting your metabolism. *menshealth.com/loseyourgut*

Heavy Weights

THE ITEMS ON THIS PAGE ARE HEAVY. Burly. Sturdy. Take your pick of descriptors; what matters is they've got *oomph*. But it's not just poundage you're encountering. It's quality. Craftsmanship. Care. These items are investments, made from materials that take time to assemble just right. They offer a stronger pour in your sartorial cocktail. You'll suspect it when you see 'em, and know it when you feel 'em. So remember to lift with your legs, not your back, and strap in. This stuff is in it for the long haul. *–Ben Boskovich*

Get yourself a pair of socks that does for your feet and ankles what your favorite cable-knit sweater does for your whole upper body.

SOCKS ($25 FOR SET OF TWO) BY **L. L. BEAN.**

Like a weighted blanket for your stylish soul, a cardigan of this magnitude is the all-in-one layer these months were made for. The directions for wear read, "Just add plain white T-shirt."

SWEATER ($440) BY **CHAMULA.**

If you've ever worn spandex under your jeans this time of year (guilty), you're in need of a solution. We suggest you turn to some seriously tough raw denim from a brand that's been doing it for over 100 years.

JEANS ($200) BY **LEE.**

Some glasses are built to blend in. Others announce themselves unapologetically. This thick-framed pair is solidly in the latter camp.

SUNGLASSES ($600) BY **JACQUES MARIE MAGE.**

Schott's iconic Perfecto jacket has remained the heavyweight champion of the world since 1928. It puts some heft on your shoulders when you slip it on and hugs your chest when you zip it up. That's what we're talking about.

PERFECTO LEATHER JACKET ($1,175) **BY SCHOTT NYC.**

One way to get your weight up is with a one-two punch of impenetrable fabric. This Carhartt jacket marries duck canvas with flannel in a twofer you can feel. A corduroy collar? Okay, now you're just flexing.

JACKET ($415) BY **CARHARTT WIP.**

We're not saying a walk in these bad boys counts as leg day, but with a sturdy heel and dense leather that forms to your feet over time, their superiority makes itself apparent with every step.

LOAFERS ($345) BY **BLACKSTOCK & WEBER.**

STYLING: LIZ DESOUSA

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFFREY WESTBROOK

SECURE

NO MATTER WHAT THE DAY BRINGS

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- Comfortable protection for leaks big or small
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Fingers on the Pulse

Rings were once reserved for mobsters and prepsters. Now they're for everyone. **BY JONATHAN EVANS**

LONG GONE ARE THE DAYS WHEN A WATCH and a wedding band were the be-all, end-all of men's jewelry. Good. Those days were boring. Now we've got options. Go ahead and pile a few bracelets on top of that watch if you'd like. And should you find yourself in the mood to dangle an earring or layer up on necklaces, feel free to do that, too. Even the brooch, once the realm of old-money socialites in sweeping ball gowns, has become a celebrity flex when pinned to a tux or dinner jacket–as compelling evidence as any that the old rules are out the window.

Which brings us back to that wedding band. It's looking a little lonely. And if you're not the marrying type, well, your fingers are looking a little naked. If you haven't delved into the wide world of rings, it might seem a bit intimidating. Styles run the gamut from the "how do I use my hands while I'm wearing that?" chunky to the almost impossibly delicate, and, let's be honest here, stacking a bunch of metal below your knuckles is a physical sensation that can take some getting used to. But if you want to energize your vibe and enliven any outfit, you should sincerely think about putting a ring on it.

But wait, you say. *Won't wearing a ring make me look kind of effete? Or, on a pinkie, like a wannabe mobster?* No and no. It's time to put aside all those out-of-date associations and consider the ring for what it is: a ring. A little piece of jewelry that can mean whatever you want it to. Feeling those "kooky aunt who moved to Sedona and talks about crystals" feelings? Slide on something made of silver and turquoise. Want to pay homage to a cultural great like James Baldwin? There's a ring, a damn cool one, with his face on it. Feeling fancy? Stack a couple Panthère pieces from Cartier on a finger, drop a satisfyingly sizable option from Tiffany on a thumb, and raise a glass of Dom. (Remember, pinkies up–and even better if there's a signet ring on one or both of 'em.)

One word of caution: Avoid oversaturation. The knuckle-duster approach you see here is a great way to display all the styles you can slot into your rotation, but you'd have a hard time doing anything with that much hardware on your hands. Plus, it looks a little show-offy. And you're not a show-off. You're someone who knows that when it comes to wearing jewelry, rings should absolutely be on the menu–and on a couple of fingers, too.

The Rise of the Man Brooch

If there's a stronger argument for pinning a glittering, jewel-encrusted work of art to your chest than Jay-Z expertly executing the move with the Tiffany & Co. Schlumberger Apollo brooch, we've yet to see it. It's a joyful rejection of antiquated norms. Brazen yet somehow still subtle. Rebellious in all the right ways. And we doubt the aristocratic old guard, with its equally old rule book, would much approve. Even better.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: GOLD JAMES BALDWIN RING ($175) BY **JOHNNY NELSON;** TIFFANY 1837 MAKERS BLACK ONYX SIGNET RING ($3,700) BY **TIFFANY & CO.;** MOTHER OF GIDEON TOURMALINE RING ($6,500) BY **THE CROWN COLLECTION;** PLUS & BONE RING ($330), SPACER RING ($275), AND SBT BAND RING ($385) BY **CHROME HEARTS;** PRIZM RING ($160, PART OF A SET) BY **THIRD CROWN;** GREEN ENAMEL SIGNET RING ($315) BY **VEERT;** PALOMA'S MELODY TITANIUM TWO-BAND RING ($1,100) BY **TIFFANY & CO.;** VINTAGE NAVAJO THUNDERBIRD RING ($90), AVAILABLE AT **VICKI TURBEVILLE;** DIAMOND LA PANTHÈRE DE CARTIER RING ($39,700) AND 18K ROSE GOLD LA PANTHÈRE DE CARTIER RING ($6,750) BY **CARTIER;** PROSTHETIC EYE RING ($285) BY **EYEBA;** 18K ROSE GOLD NAIL RING ($2,530) BY **M. COHEN;** DIAMOND TATAU RING ($6,650) BY **BIRTHRIGHT FOUNDRY;** SILVER KHARTOUM RING ($215) BY **KHIRY.**

STYLING: LIZ DESOUSA. MASON POOLE (JAY-Z).

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY WESTBROOK

TUDOR

#BORN TODARE

What is it that drives someone to greatness? To take on the unknown, venture into the unseen and dare all? This is the spirit that gave birth to TUDOR. This is the spirit embodied by every TUDOR Watch. Some are born to follow. Others are born to dare.

39 millimeter case in 316L stainless steel

Snowflake hands A hallmark of TUDOR divers' watches since 1969

Manufacture caliber MT5402 with 70-hour "weekend-proof" power-reserve, silicon hair-spring and COSC-certification

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Can I Get a Refill?

Stop buying the same bottles of grooming products over and over. Start topping them off instead.

BY GARRETT MUNCE

After you've shampooed, scrubbed, slathered, and styled with every last drop of your grooming products, those bottles have to go somewhere. That's a big problem, because the vast majority of the 120 billion units of packaging–e.g., plastic bottles–that the beauty industry creates every year ends up clogging our waterways and landfills. *But wait,* you're thinking, *I recycle my empty bottles.* You're on the right track, but less than 14 percent of plastic thrown in trash and recycling bins in the U.S. is actually recycled, and many "recyclable" packages still include parts like pumps and metal springs that are bound for the trash heap.

Before you go all Ashton Kutcher and swear off showering altogether, save the bottles and get a refill. More brands than ever are developing refillable packaging for everything from deodorant to eye cream as a way to reduce the environmental impact of your products. Bonus: This also reduces the financial impact, since you're not shelling out for new plastic packaging every go-around. That bottle of shampoo looks a whole lot better in your bathroom than washed up on a beach somewhere.

The Best Reusables for Your Routine

1. LAB SERIES MAX LS SERUM
The new refillable pump for this hydrating, antiaging serum curbs plastic waste by 20 percent, according to the brand. When you run out, pop a new vial in and you have the next month's supply. *$81; $52 for a refill*

2. OLD SPICE REFILLABLE ANTIPERSPIRANT & DEODORANT
It's the same protection you expect from classic Old Spice but with a modular upgrade. Once it's used up, twist in a new pod with the same scent, or change it up with a different one. *$10; $8 for a refill*

3. LA PRAIRIE PURE GOLD RADIANCE EYE CREAM
Even the most luxurious brands are getting into the game. You'll spend the same amount to refill this eye cream, but at least you won't feel guilty about acquiring a new jar every time. *$635; $635 for a refill*

4. HUMANRACE HUMIDIFYING CREAM
You use moisturizer every day, right? That means you could be throwing out upwards of 12 jars a year. Switch to this one and keep one jar—and keep your skin hydrated and happy without the waste. *$48; $44 for a refill*

5. SUSANNE KAUFMANN CLEANSING GEL
Glass bottles are already way more recyclable than plastic, but going the extra mile with a refillable like this face wash is even better. Empty the plastic pouch into the bottle and throw it in the recycling bin when you're done. *$89; $82 for a refill*

6. KIEHL'S AMINO ACID SHAMPOO
A liter-sized refill pouch of shampoo gives you as many as four refills. The pouch is made from 81 percent less plastic than those bottles would be and saves you running to the store to pick up another one. *$20 for 250ml; $56 for a liter refill*

7. BATHING CULTURE MIND AND BODY WASH
The refills for this natural soap come in gallon jugs, so you can use it to wash your body, your hair, your hands…even your dog. Think of it as an updated, more soothing version of castile soap and load up. *$35 for 16oz; $175 for a gallon refill*

PROP STYLING: LIZ DESOUSA

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY WESTBROOK

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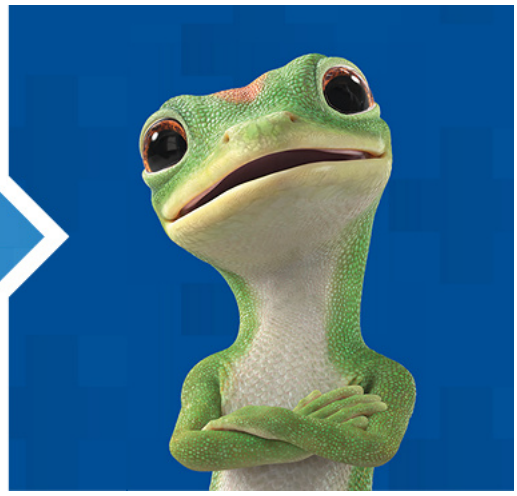

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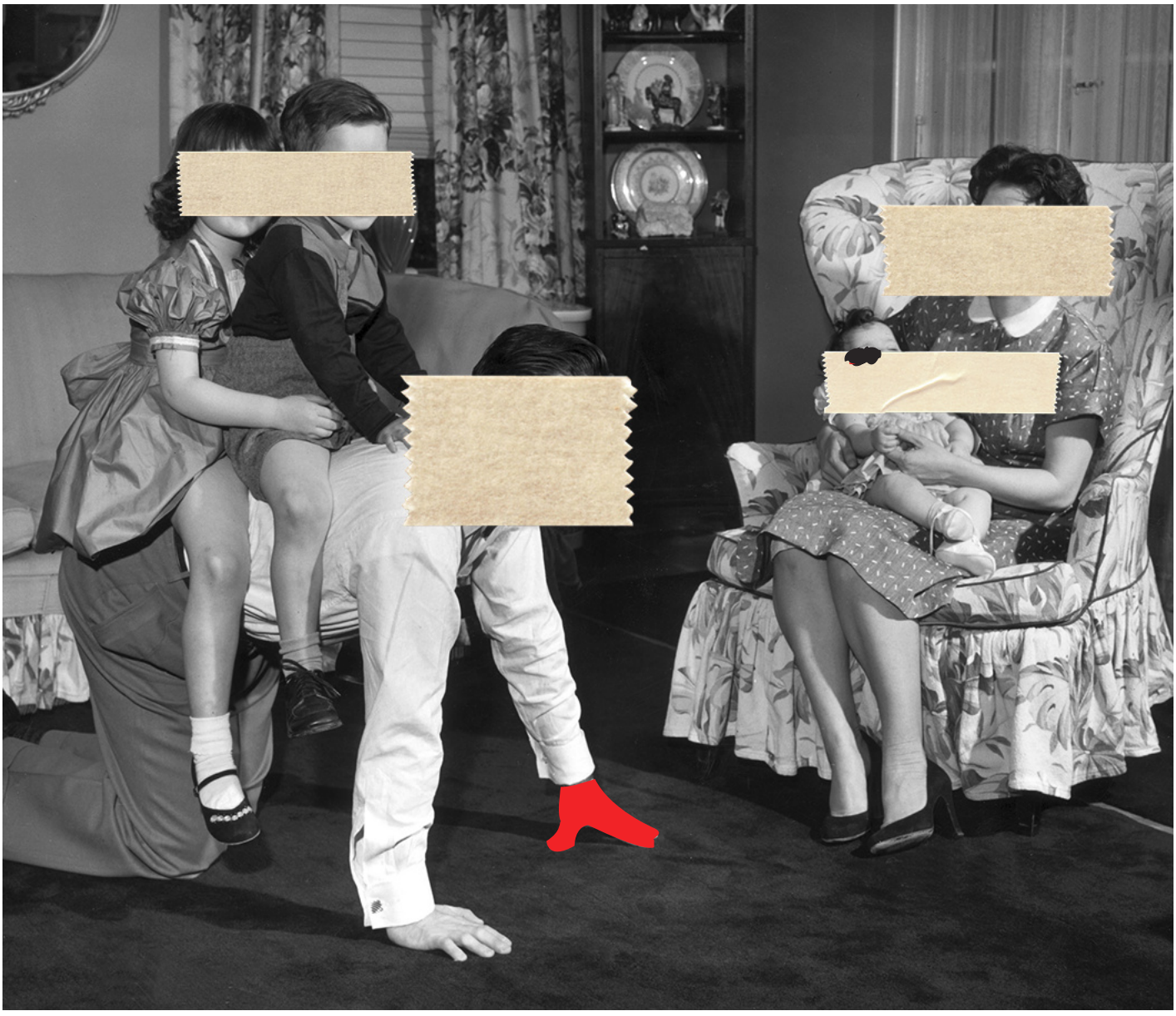

GETTY IMAGES (PORTRAIT)

HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE MY FOX NEWS PARENTS

At odds with his right-wing mom and dad, the writer orphaned himself from his family by blood in favor of a family he chose. Then he came to a disturbing—and cathartic—realization.

BY GARY SHTEYNGART

MANY PEOPLE I KNOW HAVE PARENTS WHO are suffering from Early Fox News Dementia, ranting about the perfidy of Anthony Fauci and the possibility of catching critical race theory from an open jar of mayonnaise. But at the same time, they want to give their children parental advice and guidance, though now through the prism of their separate bespoke realities. They want to remain parents, but only on their own racist and hurtful terms. My counsel to these children—stemming from what my closest friends and I experienced, all of us immigrants in our forties from different parts of the world—is to orphan yourself.

A few years after graduating from college, I decided to do just that. Not to become an orphan per se, because my mother and father remained thankfully alive, but to leave their vast, roiling emotional spheres of influence. I realized that they could not provide me with what parents are supposed to provide twenty-somethings, which is not necessarily a trust fund but rather a map of what early adulthood could look like based on their own experiences. My post-Soviet parents' map of adulthood ended at the Baltic Sea; none of their advice made any sense, but all of it was rendered with supreme parental self-confidence, because they were, after all, my parents. As a sickly adolescent, I remember them taking me to a Russian energy healer who was supposed to cure my asthma by rubbing my chest with his alcohol-soaked hands. On the career front, my mother wanted me to pursue a CPA license. (I can barely add two small figures.) When I meet fellow post-Soviet immigrants at readings, the stories they tell me in the signing line are full of similar quack cures and ridiculous career advice. How many unfortunate women of my generation were parentally goaded into pharmacy school for no discernible reason? I'll never know. And, of course, this does not only apply to Russian-speaking parents. As one friend of Indian heritage was told by his father when he was a teenager: "No one will marry you; you have no muscle tone." Or another Indian American friend, who was given this mixture of romantic and career advice: "Become an engineer or a doctor, because no one will ever love you, and this way you can at least be useful."

When I was a teenage immigrant (I arrived in the States in 1979, at the age of seven), all of this started to make me angry, and the anger only grew through early adulthood. Now I approach my parents with unbounded love, and also with sadness. You are who you are. You know what you know. You do what was done to you. My parents won't get vaccinated against Covid, in part because, in addition to Fox News, they watch Russian state television, which tells them Pfizer and Moderna may kill them or cause lethal allergies or blood clots or who knows what. How can I be angry at anything they've done to me, including the time spent with that asthma energy healer, when they are now using the same misconceived advice to rob themselves of their golden years?

DURING THE PANDEMIC, STUCK AT HOME with nothing to do, I began to write a novel about friendship, and I began to realize just how much my friends have been a family to me and to one another. As an only child, I had no older siblings to turn to, but I was surrounded with people just like me, most of them immigrants, most of them with parents who were similarly situated in their distinct alternate universes. We decided many years ago, informally, to create our own networks of families, to give each other advice, to figure out who we were supposed to become all by our lonesomes. We hunted everywhere for clues on families and relationships, from one another and from bookshelves groaning with texts in our overstuffed studios; in the end, we gleaned more information on how life should be lived from the collective works of Zadie Smith than from our ancestors back in Queens. Or as a friend of mine put it bluntly: "I've learned more from YouTube than from my parents."

> EVERY ASPECT *of our* HUMAN *and* ANIMAL SELVES *is primed for* AFFIRMATION *from the* TWO CREATURES *who stalk our* DREAMS *and* THERAPISTS' COUCHES.

Each of us picked out our role as we embarked upon early adulthood. A Korean American friend mothered me by knitting me scarves, sewing me denim wallets, and making sure I wasn't dressed like I had stumbled off Aeroflot in 1979. I became known for my résumé- and cover-letter-writing skills, proofing hundreds of these throughout the decades and then dispensing very gentle career advice: "I'm not necessarily saying PonziPlus Capital is a pyramid scheme, but. . . ." (Hmm, maybe my mother was right about that CPA license.) An Indian American friend who survived cancer regularly gave spot-on advice on navigating our country's heartless health-care system. When I suffered a horrific groin injury last year and could not wear jeans for months, he sent me a pack of dhotis (loose, trouser-like sarongs), which allowed me the gift of movement while I healed. Wealthier friends shared their riches with poorer ones; one even paid for another's stint in rehab.

And, of course, we got each other through the breakups and worse. As we reached middle age, we sharpened our emotional skills. Learning to take care of others made us better people and, for those of us who chose to have kids, hopefully better parents. Our own parents came from cruel parts of the world, where toughness was the ultimate value, which in turn made any suffering on America's wealthy shores seem relatively minor. "Stop crying!" my Korean American friend's mother told her after she went through both a breakup and a miscarriage. "Shut up already!"

"Any sign of weakness or vulnerability brings out their bully mentality," my friend told me.

After our Capitol building was raided by insurgents and in days when our very democracy has to apply for a renewal pass every two to four years, I can see native-born American parents of certain generations taking on some of the same qualities—qualities rooted in the propensity toward violence and control that was built into this country from the start. To them, their children are the enemy, and Thanksgiving is the battlefield upon which their sense of dignity will live or die. Some millennials and Gen Zers with younger, more progressive parents may not encounter this carnage, but those with parents still Booming along are stuck in a bind. They are part of a culture that encourages tight, helicopterish parent-child relations, yet talking to their parents brings them more grief than comfort. "I can't tell you how many times I say to my cousins to stop telling their parents about their lives," a friend wrote to me.

But this is easier said than done. Every aspect of our human and animal selves is primed for dialogue with and affir- (continued on page 119)

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Give Me Water Pressure or Give Me Death

If we really think we're going to slow our ongoing environmental collapse through sad showers and paper straws, we're in trouble **BY JACK HOLMES**

GETTY IMAGES

DONALD TRUMP WAS RIGHT ABOUT THE SHOWERHEADS.

Well, in one respect, anyway. There is something singularly demoralizing about bad water pressure, and one of the purest joys in this world is having a rinse under a powerful spigot. But this minor creature comfort in the vast sea of life's indignities requires water, which the human race is consuming an awful lot of these days, so we citizens must do our part to conserve what remains. That's why, in 1992, the Department of Energy limited how much water American showerheads can splash out to 2.5 gallons a minute. In 2013, amid a proliferation of multiple-showerhead fixtures, the Obama administration updated the rule: The limit would now apply to the total output of all nozzles combined. A few years later, though, Trump sensed a culture-war opportunity. His folks at the Department of Energy rolled back the standard while the big man ranted from the presidential podium about the consequences of low water pressure for his big, beautiful hair. ¶ While Trump's vision of a depressurized hellscape was a bit much—as was his contention that "people are flushing toilets ten times, 15 times" after their thrones were supposedly neutered by environmentalist nutjobs—he did, at his

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familiar gut level, stumble into truth: If you're truly interested in making a dent in the amount of water our civilization consumes, sad showers are not really the way. Flushing the toilet twice doesn't make much of a difference in the context of global water consumption, either. (If there's an acute drought in your local area, the calculus is different.) It's a side dish in a king's feast when it comes to confronting our aqua problems. A 2018 study based on 2015 data from the U. S. Geological Survey determined that the average American uses 82 gallons of water per day, or just shy of 30,000 gallons a year. That's not nothing, but it ain't much in the scheme of things.

Here's a question: How much of our freshwater consumption can we attribute to individual human households each year? The USGS found that 12 percent of American water use went to "public supply," and not even all of that went to residential use. Nearly all the rest went to agriculture, industry, and power generation, though water that goes toward the latter can often be reused. As for irrigation, we're talking projects that range from the clearly necessary—say, lettuce—to the notion that we should grow alfalfa, one of the most water-intensive crops there is, in the California desert.

The Biden administration reinstated the Obama Nozzle Standard, and Kelly Speakes-Backman, an acting assistant secretary at the Department of Energy, offered the rationale. "As many parts of America experience historic droughts, this commonsense proposal means consumers can purchase showerheads that conserve water and save them money on their utility bills." Okay, but how about we also stop with the almonds? One acre of those trees drinks up 1.3 million gallons of water a year. However, some people are getting very rich selling almond milk, so you should only flush on number two.

THIS SAME STORY, IN WHICH OUR civilization's conservation efforts are recycled into a matter of personal responsibility, has played out repeatedly. There was a moment when plastic straws became the devil incarnate, and Vinny Chase from *Entourage* was telling you the only honorable thing to do was to use a paper one that would melt in your iced coffee and make the whole thing suck. Anything else amounted to you personally sticking a plastic funnel up a sea turtle's nose. Meanwhile, the vast majority of the plastic in the ocean is not from individual consumption. A Greenpeace study found that 70 percent of it—like, say, in that infamous Pacific Trash Continent—is from discarded commercial fishing equipment. You think the turtles have a straw problem? Try nets.

It sure feels like this is part of a larger effort to shift the burden of conservation from the massive corporate and governmental entities that are fueling the lion's share of these problems and place it on individuals. Handily for the Washington types, this constitutes Taking Action without taking on the powerful interests whose lobbyists are familiar faces around town. (Where are the lobbyists for Big Showerhead? Slacking!) It also preys on our innate and understandable thirst for control and the admirable impulse among most of us to feel like we are doing something. And we should each do our part! Of course we should not go out of our way to waste water in our homes or devote our lives to consuming single-use plastics. Maybe we could cut back on the lawn care in Arizona. But that cannot come at the expense of confronting the sprawling, many-tentacled organizations that make the big impacts.

Yes, these companies are frequently delivering goods and services individuals demand, but we can only try to avoid wasting electricity in our homes. We can't often choose whether the energy comes from coal or wind turbines. So sure, I guess, put a cap on the showerheads. But maybe the feds could also have a talk with Nestlé about how much California water it's siphoning off in order to sell it back to people who have a strong claim to collective ownership of that water in the first place. The response to the interconnected environmental decline currently under way due to the activities of human civilization cannot just be for individual peons to make the sacrifices while the corporate profits—and the imperial appetites of the Pentagon—go unchallenged. Without holding larger entities accountable, whatever normal people give up in their own lives won't make a difference. It turns each of those sacrifices into just another indignity. The Environmental Protection Agency has published a whole list of water-saving initiatives for individual households, a litany that includes turning off the tap while brushing your teeth, which could, in the agency's estimation, save eight gallons of water a day. Fine, okay, but really? As in our debates around the existence of billionaires, we're suffering here for our innumeracy and for the human mind's struggle to grasp such staggering differences in scale.

So until we spread around the oblation a bit, go ahead and take a long shower if that's your idea of a good time. I won't tell if you won't.

It sure feels like this is part of a LARGER EFFORT *to* SHIFT THE BURDEN *of conservation from the* MASSIVE CORPORATE *and governmental entities that are fueling the* LION'S SHARE OF THESE PROBLEMS *and place it on individuals.*

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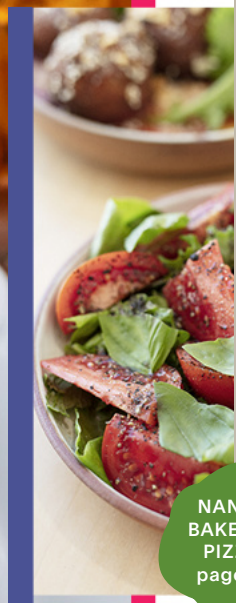
the best NEW restaurants 2021



THE HARVEY HOUSE, page 58

NANA'S BAKERY & PIZZA, page 60

MARCH, page 56

WANDERLUST IS A REAL THING. HUNGER IS A REAL thing. And in a year when you couldn't stand to look at your Instant Pot anymore and had to delay that vacation to Paris, when you craved something more than travel shows and take-out, the most satisfying way to feed the need for a journey was to go to a restaurant, feel taken care of, and try at least one thing from the menu that you'd never had before.

The transportive power of food, the soul-stirring nature of hospitality—real things, too. This is all to say that in these not normal times, we need both the normalcy and the escape of restaurants now more than ever.

NICOLE FRANZEN (THE HARVEY HOUSE). JOSHUA BEHAN (NANA'S). JULIE SOEFER PHOTOGRAPHY (MARCH).

And we want to support an industry that still needs it. So, to shine a spotlight on a larger number of our favorite new places this year, we enlisted not one, not two, but four people to eat around the country: seasoned food writers Omar Mamoon and Joshua David Stein, our former food and drink editor Jeff Gordinier, and yours truly. Together and separately, we traveled thousands of miles and dined at hundreds of restaurants to deliver a list nearly twice as large as last year's: the more than thirty places you'll read about here and a further ten on Esquire.com.

As we ate around America, we were drawn to food made with raw, elemental fire and charcoal—it's never gone out of style, after all these millennia. The char called to us whether it graced the elote from a Sonoran grill at Bacanora in Phoenix, the ends of gyro meat at Andros Taverna in Chicago, or the dry-aged Wagyu at Austin's Hestia. We couldn't stop talking about delicious, nonpreachy vegan meals that would make even the most ardent meat eater crave vegetables. (Here's a mini list, the most transcendent vegan options of the year: 1. Fried lasagna at Cadence, New York. 2. Mushroom, corn truffle, and potato at Oyster Oyster, Washington, D.C. 3. Sunflower bread and butter at Eleven Madison Park, New York.) We even fell back in love with multicourse tasting menus at Chicago's Ever and Houston's March. In the hands of the right team, they can still be a sublime, luxe experience rather than the pricey, interminable drag they oftentimes veer into. And you'll see that there's more New York representation than in previous years. Why? Because New York is undeniably back in a big way.

Perhaps most significant: We found ourselves digging into comfort, sure, but we also leaned into the unfamiliar. Into adventure. Eating at the very best restaurants is like winning a ticket to another place, another time. To the past and the future—and sometimes both at once. To Macau via pork chop; to the graciousness of a Wisconsin supper club when your martini glass is refreshed with a frosted one; to central Texas and the Black South through brisket; to a Scandinavian grandmother's kitchen by way of an apple-pie crust ladened with lard; to a precolonized America via the sweet, nutty flavors of hand-harvested wild rice.

Our minds have been warped. The experiential miles we logged will last us a very long time (or at least until we start reporting next year's Best New Restaurants list). And we hope you'll be able to take some of these culinary, cultural journeys as well. When you're ready, get out there and support these places, those on our previous years' lists, and any of your local favorites. Because sometimes that escape is closer than you think. *–Kevin Sintumuang*

DHAMAKA

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Eat. Sweat. Swoon. Drink. Repeat. At this Technicolor corner of the Lower East Side's Essex Market, chef Chintan Pandya and restaurateur Roni Mazumdar create Indian food with a visceral, transportive energy by showcasing the fringes of the cuisine: a paplet fry, which is a whole, fried pomfret fish, dusted with ginger and cumin, an ideal partner to beer; a fiery, funky gurda kapoora, made with goat kidneys and testicles; a Bengal curry with baby shark. It is the stuff of homes and street stalls thousands of miles away. And yes, it is spicy. It calls for you to put down the phone. The tapping and scrolling can make the world feel small, but is that really the case? Eat, sweat, swoon, drink, repeat, and realize: There's so much to this world, so much to try. *119 Delancey Street* —K. S.

Mutton-based Champaran meat with a whole head of garlic.

Parsnip, caviar, leek, and pink parsley.

EVER

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

There is a jar, neatly covered in an aluminum wrapper, like a yogurt cup. Open it and, poof, smoke wafts into your nostrils, and instinctively you lick the emulsions artfully placed on the underside of the wrapper. Trippy. The second course arrives with a tiny skull made of almond cream, as if to say, *Get ready for a mind-altering ride, dude.* And so begins a journey into chef Curtis Duffy and Michael Muser's fantastical slow burn of a tasting menu, which, even with the serious modernist hijinks, is delicious and playful. (Yes, that's Matthew McConaughey reading from his memoir on the bathroom's speaker.) The pairings of esoteric wines are downright magical, an extra dimension to what feels like a mellow acid trip. *1340 West Fulton Street* —K. S.

Helen

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Helen was a real woman who wore pearls and had a grill inside her house. Her facility with coals lives on in her grandson Rob McDaniel's restaurant: Witness the twenty-two-ounce, dry-aged Kansas City strip, drizzled with beef-and-herb-infused duck fat, and the fennely porchetta with a crackling skin. The chef describes the place as not a steakhouse. "But," he says, "I want them to know we're here." They will. If not for the meat, then for the sides, like corn ribs, eighths of a cob served elote-style, that curl up like a rib, or a smile, when eaten under the benevolent gaze of the portrait of Helen hanging from the wall. *2013 Second Avenue North* —JOSHUA DAVID STEIN

JENNY HUANG (1). MICHAEL MUSER (2). CARY NORTON (3).

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hestia

AUSTIN, TEXAS

Among the glass towers of Austin's downtown, fire in all its Promethean and primal glory is on display at Kevin Fink's Hestia. It springs forth from a twenty-foot, white-oak-fed hearth adorned with medieval-looking levers manned by drawn-looking chefs. (Fink says that, on average, his chefs lose fifteen pounds during their first weeks in front of the grill.) With heat reaching 1200 degrees Fahrenheit, inches and seconds matter. Hard to believe that the same fire that tenderly cooks the halibut—kept three feet above the flame and served with an iridescent mirror glaze of a brown-butter sauce—is responsible for the ferocious char on the dry-aged Wagyu bavette, with its sunset-red center, accompanied by lacquered layers of potato and butter coiled into a tight, croissant-like bun. You'll even find an element of flame buried in the matcha kakigori (above), the best of the desserts. Within that frigid magic mountain of lavender and rhubarb salted cream lurks a scoop of burnt-honey ice cream, like a secret smoldering heart. *607 West Third Street, #105* —J. D. S.

5

HORN BARBECUE

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

You'll have to line up early to enjoy pitmaster Matt Horn's smoky meats, but the wait is worth it. Brisket is the move—smoked low and slow for up to sixteen hours over white oak. The fatty parts melt in your mouth, the leaner ends stay firm yet juicy, and the bark maintains a pronounced bite. This combination of central Texas barbecue and Black foodways—which Horn and his wife, Nina, describe as "West Coast barbecue"—feels major, but you can also tell that big things are just getting started. *2534 Mandela Parkway* —OMAR MAMOON

6

MARCH

HOUSTON, TEXAS

Twice a year, the menu at Felipe Riccio's ambitious new restaurant pivots its inspiration from one area of the Mediterranean to another. In between, the place shuts down for a month while the staff travels the region, gathering knowledge. But the dining room doesn't feel like a classroom. The current nine-course tasting menu probes dishes of Andalusian cuisine with abstract aplomb. Angulas, tiny eels that look like white spaghetti with eyes, are in the fried tortilla. Mariscos en conserva, often pickled and served in jars, is a wonderland of escabeche'd clams finished in jamón fat. March, as the name implies, is a steady movement toward the avant-garde. *1624 Westheimer Road* —J. D. S.

OWAMNI

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

The ingredients are ancient, but for most, experiencing things like hand-harvested wild rice, sweet and nutty, is new and revelatory—the taste of a past nearly destroyed by colonization. At chef Sean Sherman and Dana Thompson's restaurant, built in a former mill along the Mississippi River, tasting dishes made entirely from indigenous ingredients is soul-nurturing. A reclamation. There are the indigenous tea blends. A conifer-preserved rabbit dotted with fresh berries. And the wild-rice tart, made with no colonized ingredients (like flour or refined sugar), is electrifying. To eat here is to experience both the past and the future. *420 First Street South* —K. S.

7

Cacao with aronia sorbet.

CHEF OF THE YEAR

SEAN SHERMAN OF OWAMNI

MINNEAPOLIS

Owamni is an empowering place filled with knowledge of the way food should have been and will be. It will enlighten you. But this is just one part of the mission. Sherman and his partner Dana Thompson's Indigenous Food Lab continues to make meals for Minnesota's tribal communities and teach future generations how to cook with indigenous ingredients, and it will soon sell those foods in bulk. Sherman is also working on a follow-up to his seminal book, *The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen*, tentatively called *Turtle Island: The Foods and Traditions of the Indigenous Peoples of North America*. He's a leader in reclaiming indigenous foodways for people here and, soon, across continents.

COURTESY HESTIA (4). COURTESY HORN BBQ (5). JULIE SOEFER PHOTOGRAPHY (6). JOHN YUCCAS PHOTOGRAPHY (7). HEIDI EHALT (SHERMAN).

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THE HARVEY HOUSE

MADISON, WISCONSIN

As the frost on my martini waned, a server appeared with a freshly chilled glass and poured the remaining elixir into it lest I take another sip that wasn't maximally cold. The Harvey House charms with Great Lakes supper-club elegance. But it's Shaina Robbins Papach and chef Joe Papach's deceptively simple menu that will have you longing to return to the upper Midwest. A relish tray with pressed celery and sous vide deviled eggs topped with roe. Walleye sautéed atop a crouton-crisp layer of bread and its own mousse. Apple pie served pavlova-style in a delicate meringue shell. Yes, it's classical technique meets midwestern food, but the sum is so much more: delight, surprise, and then some. *644 West Washington Avenue* —K. S.

8

10

Falafel sandwich with mint and lemon.

CADENCE

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

From a narrow sliver of a space on New York's eclectic East Seventh Street, Cadence delivers a cri de coeur in the form of vegan southern food that cuts through the chaos. The word *vegan* can be divisive, but Cadence serves immensely flavorful, ingeniously conceived dishes that happen not to contain any animal products. Because does it really matter if chef Shenarri Freeman's black-eyed-pea-and-garlic pancake—dwelling in between sweet and savory, topped with caviar-like pickled mustard seeds—doesn't have dairy? Do you need to know that no cows were harmed in the making of the Bolognese, part of a sensational deep-fried lasagna? No. That's what they call gravy. And whether it's vegan gravy or not is just noise. *122 East Seventh Street* —J. D. S.

9

Maple buttermilk cornbread with bee-free honey butter and jams.

SHAWARMAJI

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

Chef Mohammad Abutaha offers large, juicy spits of seasoned spicy chicken, which is marinated in yogurt, sliced, seared, placed in a large wrap, then slathered in garlicky toum sauce, a popular condiment found in the Levant. It is insanely delicious. Even better: going Abboudi-style—that is, adding french fries. The entire thing is the size of your forearm, and somehow each bite manages to get better, right down to the last, when the juices concentrate and drip down your wrists. *2123 Franklin Street* —O. M.

irwin's

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

The romance is unexpected. Graffitied room, perched atop an old art deco high school, a sprawling terrace with science-lab tables and plastic school chairs, lit by string lights and the moon (if you're lucky), with sweeping views of the low-slung row houses and the Walt Whitman Bridge. And then chef Michael Ferreri's modern Sicilian fare is rolled out by a gracious staff—a fritto misto with succulent shrimp and fried lemons, handmade al dente twists of trofie pasta, a perfect caponata. Natural wines are poured, Prince comes on, and all of a sudden South Philly feels like the most hip, romantic place around. *800 Mifflin Street* —K. S.

11

RISING STAR OF THE YEAR

SHENARRI FREEMAN OF CADENCE

NEW YORK

Imagine starting a restaurant that gets even meat eaters talking about how a vegan fried lasagna can be this damn good–and doing it before you've graduated from culinary school. That's Shenarri Freeman in 2021. In a year when eating vegan blew up across the country, Freeman's vegan soul-food cooking was a firecracker.

12

OYSTER OYSTER

WASHINGTON, D. C.

The menu leans on the highly sustainable mushroom oyster and the bivalve kind. Even the candles are made from used oyster shells. But this is not a preachy place. It's one of experimental exuberance, where chef Rob Rubba serves watermelon with peanuts and oysters (it just works) and a dish of mushroom, corn truffle, and potato that tastes like the forest floor in the best way possible. The $75 bargain of a tasting menu will make you believe that an oystertarian future can be damn delicious and fun. *1440 Eighth Street NW* —K. S.

NICOLE FRANZEN (8). ERIC MEDSKER (9, FREEMAN). COURTESY SHAWARMAJI (10). CLAY WILLIAMS (11). REY LOPEZ (12).

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13

iris

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

An Aegean stew of poached lobster, black sea bass, green-lip mussels, and rich shellfish broth.

The hummus might do it—that crunchy, earthy topsoil of fennel pollen and sesame seeds. Or maybe it'll be the glistening meat of the quail kebab. Whatever it is, at some point at Iris you'll find yourself surprised. Surprised by the flavor combinations, by a Turkish wine on sommelier Amy Racine's awareness-expanding list, by the alacrity of the service, and overall that chef John Fraser has managed to bring this Greek/Turkish jewel to a stretch of midtown Manhattan associated with lonesome office buildings. *1740 Broadway* —JEFF GORDINIER

BEVERAGE DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

AMY RACINE OF IRIS

NEW YORK

Turkey. Greece. Croatia. Tasmania. Lebanon. The sprawling wine list that Amy Racine has cultivated at Iris is a master class in what the average drinker may find to be a mystery. But with Racine's guidance, you'll be led from a brut Tselepos Amalia from the Peloponnese, a fragrant and lively sparkler, to the windswept salinity of an Assyrtiko that's perfect for seafood, and even a big, earthy Thymiopoulos Naoussa, a red worth brooding with.

14

MYRIEL

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

A current of wildness runs beneath the surface at Myriel. On the ground floor, it looks like hygge central, with well-scrubbed customers packed into a cozy room for plates of lamb meatballs and apple pie; meanwhile, in the basement below, chef Karyn Tomlinson and her team are butchering whole hogs. This is Scandinavian midwestern grandma cooking with a touch of Sweden's Fäviken, where Tomlinson spent time in the kitchen. Myriel is one of the most revolutionary new spots in America, even if Minnesotans are too modest to say so. *470 Cleveland Avenue South* —J.G.

15

THE ANCHOVY BAR

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

As the name suggests, anchovies are the star of the show at the Anchovy Bar (actually more of a restaurant), from the team that brought you the much-celebrated State Bird Provisions. When in season, fresh live anchovies from the city's surrounding water arrive daily and are pickled into tart boquerones, served with yogurt, cucumber, mint, and spicy fermented turnips. But the restaurant also celebrates the great canned Cantabrian anchovy, imported from Spain and served simply with a light, crusty white bread and fresh accoutrements. The rest of the menu includes seafood-centric small plates that feature an array of local sea creatures prepared in different ways—raw, cured, or cooked—like a halibut ceviche or geoduck clams with somen noodles. *1740 O'Farrell Street* —O.M.

16

PIZZA ACROSS AMERICA

Nana's Bakery & Pizza

MYSTIC, CONNECTICUT

The doughnuts taste like melting cumulus clouds. The New England pizza, strewn with clams and bacon, tastes like clam chowder if it spent a few months in Italy and had an epiphany in Naples. The menu at Nana's is full of stuff you see all over Connecticut, but everything rises to a higher level thanks to deep fermentation and the careful hand of James Wayman, one of the unsung pioneers in American cooking. *32 Williams Avenue* —J.G.

Dimo's Apizza

PORTLAND, OREGON

It's not standard for a pizzeria to make its own hand-pulled mozzarella. Even less common is double baking a pizza in a gas deck oven and a wood-fired oven. But over at Dimo's, proprietor Doug Miriello does all of the above in an effort to re-create the coal-oven-baked, extra-charred, thin and crispy, long and oblong-shaped "apizza" that he ate as a kid in Connecticut. *701 East Burnside Street* —O.M.

La Natural

MIAMI, FLORIDA

The cold-fermented dough here is so good that you can eat it alone, along with a side of anchovies, as a puffy, slightly charred rosemary bread. Then get a few of the artfully rustic pies, which owner Javier Ramirez perfected while throwing parties at his home. Go for the one with the local burrata (left), the white pie with scallions and numbing Szechuan peppercorns, and then get one to go. *7289 Northwest Second Avenue* —K.S.

COURTESY IRIS (13, RACINE). COURTESY THE ANCHOVY BAR (15). JOSHUA BEHAN (NANA'S). COURTESY DIMO'S APIZZA (DIMO'S). JEANNE CANTO (LA NATURAL).

INTRODUCING

Bespoke Post x ESQUIRE

Issue Three

We've once again teamed up with the fine folks over at Bespoke Post on an exclusive collection of premium goods to equip you handsomely for anything the day might hold. It includes:

A watch cap from Knickerbocker / A set of Aged & Ore's whiskey glasses / A parlor dish from Hemson Goods + three more everyday essentials

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17

degust

HOUSTON, TEXAS

At first the tasting menu at Javier "Javi" Becerra and Erico "Rico" Mackins's place might look like a Worship Thy Chef ordeal, but it is just the right type of weird. The menu is autobiographical but not solipsistic, a synthesis of Mexican and Spanish cuisines, gently raked through Japanese technique, as in a double-fried octopus tentacle curled atop garlic-and-orange-infused buttermilk. But the true brilliance was when Mackins served a savory golden baba, made with yogurt and Castelveltrano puree. It's rare to have no idea how a thing is going to taste. Rico then replenished the baba with butter like a modern Mister Softee, quietly mouthing, "Whip it, whip it real good." *7202 Long Point Road* —J. D. S.

20

MISS RIVER

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

There is an elegant decadence to the classic Louisiana fare of Alon Shaya's Miss River, located just beyond the Chandelier Bar (get the martini) inside the new Four Seasons. Blue crab au gratin is served with saltines fried in clarified butter. At dinner, dirty rice is elevated to marquee status served bibimbap-style in a clay pot, adorned with pâté, a duck yolk, and, for good measure, roast duck. At lunch, the muffuletta is a stunner: A crisp sesame bun filled with artisanal cured meats, it's the size of a hubcap and presented under a silver dome. Miss River is built for celebrations, but the food is so craveworthy that being alive seems like a good enough reason to swing in. *2 Canal Street* —K. S.

EN PASSANT

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Dinner at this cozy, dimly lit neighborhood gem might seem all over the place: There's Moroccan kefta-spiced cauliflower, plump fennel sausages with an Italian Calabrian chile caramel, and Chinese broccoli covered with crispy garlic, preserved lemon, and salty, flaky bacalao. But this menu is linked by comfort. Don't skip the burger as a shared midcourse or main—chef Sam Engelhardt had a hand in the famed Au Cheval beast nearby. The man knows what he's doing with beef and buns. *3010 West Diversey Avenue* —O. M.

18

19

Gumbo with chicken, sausage, shrimp, and blue crab.

ROOTS SOUTHERN TABLE

DALLAS, TEXAS

All along Rawhide Creek, Muscovy ducks waddle blithely. If only they knew that a block away, Tiffany Derry, chef of Roots Southern Table, is making hay of their cousins' fat. It's what gives her brined and marinated fried chicken its snow-crunch crust, her potatoes their golden skin. Its benedictions are felt on every table. Additionally, the cornbread tastes like the skillet it comes in, charred and sweet. Shrimp and grits becomes gooey, arancini-like, jalapeño-studded balls. Roots is plangent proof that Black southern cooking from the Creole coast, incorporating as it does elements of French, Spanish, African, and Caribbean traditions, alchemizing as it does migrations forced and otherwise, is both the country's greatest culinary patrimony and its path ahead. *13050 Bee Street, Suite 160* —J. D. S.

POP-UP OF THE YEAR

BRIDGETOWN ROTI

LOS ANGELES

When the pandemic hit and longtime Los Angeles cook Rashida Holmes was out of work, she started selling buttery baked patties filled with sticky oxtail out of her house via Instagram. They became a hit. A few months later, she formalized her business, moved into a commercial kitchen, and expanded her menu to include flaky, chewy rotis filled with creamy curry chicken, Trinidadian doubles filled with spicy green chickpea curry on fluffy fried flatbreads, and other fiery Caribbean fare she grew up eating. She's been popping up at bars and restaurants since and has aspirations to open up her very own brick-and-mortar sometime in 2022. *672 South Santa Fe Avenue* —O. M.

21

BACANORA

PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Grab a bar seat close to the kitchen and watch Sonoran-born chef/owner Rene Andrade and his team play with literal fire as they command the flame from the massive custom-built grill. At any given moment, you'll find elote blackening (above), homemade flour tortillas warming, spatchcocked chickens charring, and massive bone-in rib-eye steaks searing, all above burning mesquite. Don't snooze on the small-plate specials—Andrade will often do cold crudos and acidic aguachiles that help balance the menu. *1301 Northwest Grand Avenue, Unit 1* —O. M.

COURTESY DEGUST (17). GARRETT SWEET (18). ALYSSA VINCENT (19). CHRISTIAN HORAN (20). GABE WILLIAMS (21).

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TIME INSTRUMENTS
FOR URBAN EXPLORERS

Bell & Ross

22

esmeralda

ANDOVER, VERMONT

The day begins with dirt, fire, stones. Then, once the morning fog has burned off, chef JuanMa Calderón, partner Maria Rondeau, and chef Victor Guadalupe (left) gather in their backyard among the Green Mountains and layer in hunks of pork, fava beans, and other vegetables. This is the pachamanca, a Peruvian tradition of cooking food underground. Hours later, as the guests arrive, all hands get involved in extracting a meal that is, miraculously, perfectly cooked. Esmeralda is further proof that a restaurant doesn't need four walls. *740 Stigers Road* —K.S.

23

Red snapper crudo.

MOON RABBIT

WASHINGTON, D.C.

When the fish sandwich arrived—a catfish fillet, delicately flaky in the middle, crunchy on the outside, scented with turmeric and lemongrass, hugged by a pillowy curry milk-bread bun—it was devoured, and immediately we asked for another, and some extra milk bread, too. We did the same with the simple charred cabbage with pineapple and even got another epic ga chien fried chicken, layered with a chile-maple fish sauce, for the road. Chef Kevin Tien's dishes are an exploration not only of Vietnamese cuisine but of maximum craveability. *801 Wharf Street SW* —K.S.

25

Chirashi.

24

GAGE & TOLLNER

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

A resurrected restaurant can be a Dr. Frankenstein mess or something Christlike. Chef Sohui Kim's glimmering second coming of Brooklyn's historic steakhouse is, praise be, the latter. Walk through the door and the mirrored, fabric-walled dining room opens before you much as it did in 1879, when the restaurant first opened. (It closed in 2004.) The team has inhaled much of what made G&T so beloved, including favorites from the eighties, when culinary giant Edna Lewis was head chef, like the she-crab soup (above), creamy as ever and laced with roe. But this isn't just historic-steakhouse cosplay. Kim's major twist is grass-fed steaks that, under their handsome darkened swirls of char, reveal great tenderness. *372 Fulton Street* —J.D.S.

ROSELLA

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Earth-friendly sushi is Rosella's calling card. You won't find large-carbon-footprint items flown in from a Tokyo fish market here. And while delicious nigiri from local and sustainable ingredients—like scallops from Montauk—is worth snagging a seat for in the jewel-box-sized space, it's everything else on Rosella's tight menu that leaves the bigger impression. Fish paitan, made from the heads, is a briny, soul-warming broth reminiscent of the ocean. The spicy XO sauce conjured from shellfish is so umami-rich, you'll wish you could take a bottle home and make everything better. *137 Avenue A* —K.S.

26

PEARL RIVER DELI

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

There's a bit of magic happening at Pearl River Deli, in Los Angeles's Chinatown, where you'll find chef Johnny Lee's soulful, intensely flavorful take on Cantonese cuisine. His char siu (left) features pork collar cooked sous vide, then roasted, so that it's simultaneously juicy and chewy. The Macau pork-chop bun is slathered with creamy, umami-maggi-infused mayo and topped with a sofrito of stewed tomatoes, onion, and garlic spiked with capers—a nod to the Portuguese influence on the region. *936 North Hill Street* —O.M.

COURTESY ESMERALDA (22). COURTESY MOON RABBIT (23). LIZZIE MUNRO (24). COURTESY ROSELLA (25). COURTESY PEARL RIVER DELI (26).

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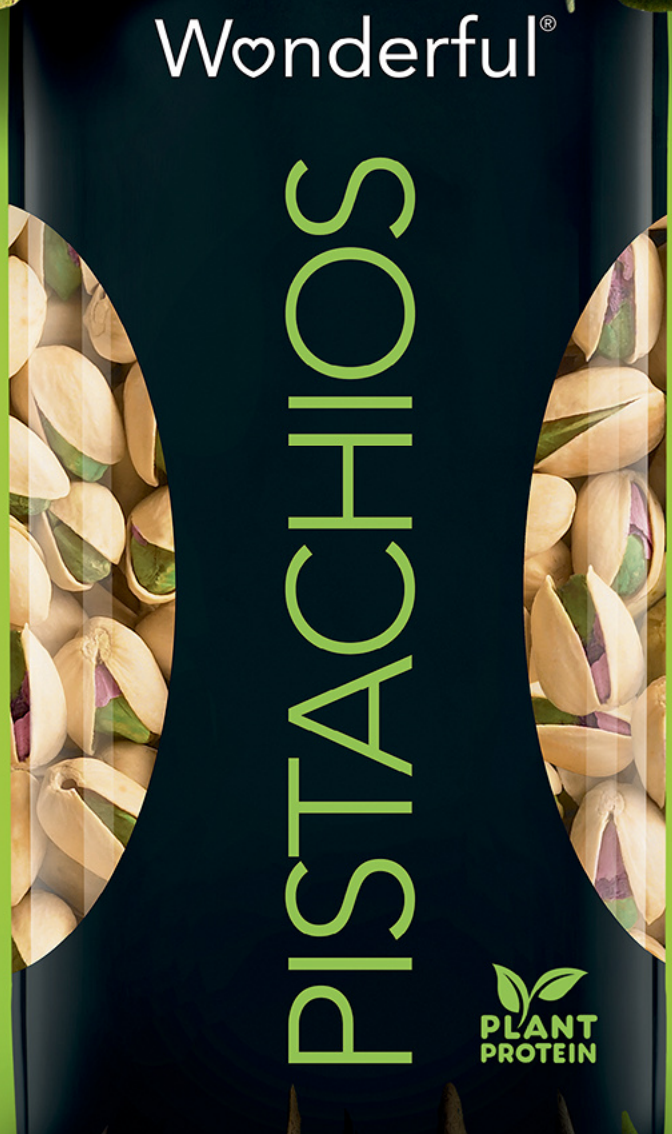

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CONTENTO

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

27

Octopus with black chimichurri and cauliflower gazpacho.

Who gets to enjoy a restaurant? Swing by Contento, in Harlem, and you'll find a place that's asking that question—and answering it—in a new way. Many people are here in wheelchairs and with guide dogs, because they know that the entire restaurant has been engineered with access in mind. People are here for Yannick Benjamin's boundary-smashing wine list and chef Oscar Lorenzzi's chickpea fritters and ceviches, and because they sense that Contento is a place that treats the idea of hospitality as an article of faith. *88 East 111th Street* —J. G.

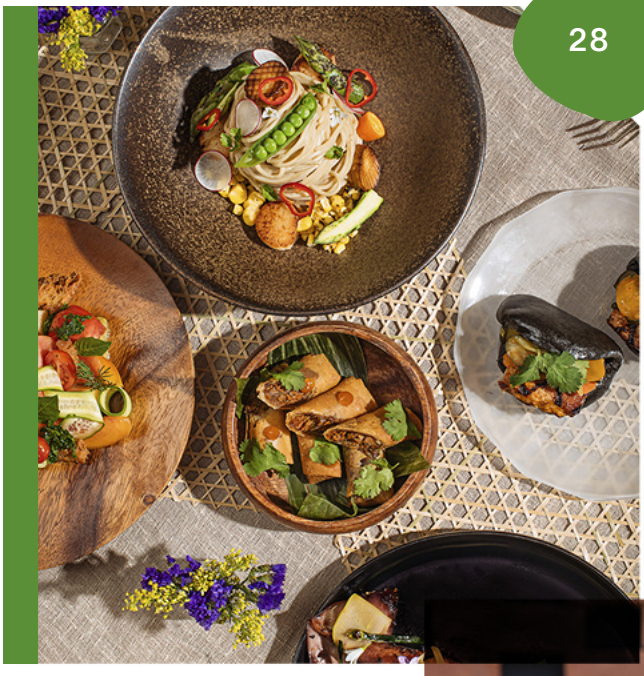
PASTRY CHEF OF THE YEAR

SERENA CHOW FISHER OF MARLENA

SAN FRANCISCO

The dessert course might be our favorite part of Marlena's affordable, $65 four-course tasting menu. Pastry chef/co-owner Serena Chow Fisher has worked pastry in fine-dining restaurants like Eleven Madison Park and offers her own unique interpretations of classic desserts, like her mini-masterpiece: burned Italian meringue topped with chocolate ganache, pieces of brown-sugar cake, and a hazelnut graham-cracker crumble. Garnished with marigold petals, it evokes a s'more. (The flower mimics the campfire.) Creative, nostalgic, and delicious. –*O. M.*

28



abacá

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

The pancit is made from fresh, handmade noodles, springy to the touch, and topped with plump scallops, calamansi, and corn (top left). The sauce that brings it all together is a funky housemade XO, which starts its life as shrimp paste, scallops, and chiles. Juicy fried pork lumpia (center left) are served with herbs, lettuce wraps, and an apple ketchup (also made in-house) that gives what's usually a deep-fried snack a lightness and brightness. Making Filipino classics with a subtle Californianess was the calling card of chef Francis Ang and Dian Ang at their lively Pinoy Heritage pop-ups, and, thankfully, that's also the case at their first restaurant, Abacá. Bring friends and order plenty—it's a party. And don't skip the dessert: Francis started his culinary career as a fine-dining pastry chef, and he's still got it. *2700 Jones Street* —O. M.

29

ANDROS TAVERNA

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Not a brunch person? Andros Taverna, from husband-and-wife duo Doug Psaltis and Hsing Chen, will change that. Start with Chen's gigantic baklava bear claw and a refreshing cappuccino freddo (right). And then the Olympia, chef Psaltis's modernized, thoughtful nod to a Greek diner staple: sunny-side eggs, fries with an uncanny crunch-to-fluff ratio, and strips of gyro made from pork shoulder and neck and served with kisses of char. Still not convinced you can be a brunch person? Then come for dinner and experience the gyro to end all gyros. *2542 North Milwaukee Avenue* —K. S.

30

Market raita salad with ginger-cumin yogurt and Szechuan chili oil.

OMA'S HIDEAWAY

PORTLAND, OREGON

Oma's Hideaway is chef Thomas Pisha-Duffly's sister restaurant to his Indonesian hit, Gado Gado. For his sophomore spot, he takes inspiration from his Chinese-Indonesian heritage, Southeast Asian hawker fare, and, of course, his *oma* (grandmother). You'll find chewy egg noodles and silky dumpling wrappers made from scratch for his wonton mee, and flaky, buttery roti canai with a creamy curry topped with puffed sorghum. Pair it with a cocktail crafted by bar manager Emily Warden, like the vodka mixed-berry/pear homemade Jell-O shots or the tequila Aperol shiso slushies. *3131 Southeast Division Street* —O. M.

MIKHAIL LIPYANSKIY (27). COURTESY MARLENA (FISHER). MELISSA DE MATA (28). COURTESY ANDROS TAVERNA (29). CHRISTINE DONG (30).

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Ke

Keanu Reeves

Guy's always working — sixty-eight movies in thirty-five years. Playing killing machines, doofuses, romantics, messiahs, and devils. But always Keanu. Which always means something more.

BY RYAN D'AGOSTINO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NATHANIEL GOLDBERG

STYLING BY ANASTASIA BARBIERI

PARIS, THE DAY BEFORE HALLOWEEN

He sits in the black leather booth of a Paris brasserie, a porcelain cup half full of cappuccino by his elbow, thumbing the screen of his phone with his left hand, which is caked with slashes of dried blood.

"Let's see, where is it," he says, scrolling. He's searching for a text message he sent to Carrie-Anne Moss, his costar in the *Matrix* movie franchise, almost two years ago.

Keanu Reeves had appeared in the doorway of this restaurant exactly on time, on about five hours' sleep, just a few minutes ago. It's called Le Grand Colbert, and he was last here for one very long night with Jack Nicholson and Diane Keaton, filming the end of the 2003 movie *Something's Gotta Give*. He hasn't set foot in the place since.

He was wearing a surgical mask, a black knit cap over his long black straw hair, a black motorcycle jacket, and jeans. He showed his proof of vaccination to the maître d'. And he walked into the bright salon of a place, thirty-foot ceilings and big round bistro lights and brass railings and clinking glasses and waitstaff in clean white shirts and dark aprons.

As he removed his mask and walked down the center of the restaurant, diners (a good percentage of whom are tourists and are here because of the movie), waiters, and bartenders watched him, a surreal, time-warp moment. He was Meg Ryan stopping into Katz's Deli for a pastrami sandwich.

Is that–?

Does he actually–?

He stopped to chat at a table where someone happened to have worked with his girlfriend, the artist Alexandra Grant. He passed the booth where the famous scene was filmed. People always request that booth, so it's always occupied. Today the woman sitting where Keanu Reeves sat in the movie she loves looked up and saw Keanu Reeves walk right past the booth where Keanu Reeves sat, and damn near choked on her escargot.

He's still scrolling, searching for the thing.

"That looks like it hurt," I say after a minute. "Your hand."

He twists his hand around and looks down at it, showing a gash that extends from his pinkie clear down the side of his palm, all the way to the wrist bone.

"Oh, yeah," he says, then gives a quick tilt of his head and smiles. "Movie shenanigans!"

Keanu is here talking with me to promote *The Matrix Resurrections*, the fourth installment in one of his gazillion-dollar movie franchises. But the reason he's in Paris is to film *John Wick: Chapter 4*, the fourth installment in his *other* gazillion-dollar movie franchise.

"We're filming nights now, and I finished at seven o'clock this morning," he says, pulling back his hair, still damp from a shower. "I just woke up." It's 1:15 in the afternoon. He coughs a little.

I'm still looking at his hand. "Does it hurt?"

He looks at me, momentarily confused, then realizes I'm the one who's confused. "Oh, no, this is all movie blood," he says, amused. "It doesn't all come off in the first wash."

He turns back to his phone, focused. He scrolls through dozens of messages, a blur of alternating blue and gray text bubbles, the gray ones–the other person's–punctuated sometimes with emojis and hearts.

"Sorry this is taking so long," Keanu says. An apology, which is surprising because he is doing a favor, searching for a text message I've asked him to find–a message that contains evidence of him doing a favor for someone else, in this case Moss. (She did the emojis and hearts.)

"It's weird going back through these," he says, lost in the text messages the way you get when you scroll back in time. "This is very on-point for *Resurrections*."

Now he scrolls in silence. Realizing that there will be a long dead space on my tape recorder, he leans down and says into it loudly, "I'm still looking up the list."

Toward the end of filming *Resurrections,* Moss had asked him to recommend a few good movies she could watch with her teenage kids. "In the *Matrix* movies, I've always felt like I was his partner, and he was my partner, in the execution of these characters," Moss told me. "It was never the feeling of, *Oh, he's the movie star.* His work ethic is unlike anyone I've ever met, and I've seen it up close: He trains harder, works harder, cares more, always asks more and more questions to understand the depth of what we're doing. And while he was doing all of that for himself, he always had an eye out for me. Like when I asked him for those movies, it seems like a little thing, but he's so busy, he's exhausted, and took the time to write this very, very thoughtful list."

"It's here somewhere," Keanu says at the restaurant. "Anything else you'd like to talk about while I'm scrolling?"

ONE MONTH EARLIER

Are we into October yet?

It takes him a second. Not because of the pandemic blur, where time and place bend and fold over each other so that daily life has sometimes seemed distorted to the point of being unrecognizable. No, it takes Keanu a second because he's been in Paris for two days–no, wait it's . . . yeah, this is the *third* day–and in Berlin for six months before that, filming nights and sleeping until midafternoon (he calls them vampire hours), and he's just packed and unpacked without a stop at home, and, well, you sometimes lose track.

But yes, it's October 2. Or 3. Something like that. Saturday. It's three o'clock, and he just woke up. He's had some toast with crunchy peanut butter and honey, and he's drinking coffee from a glass cup. He has the John Wick beard, which he periodically trims with scissors to keep it the same John Wick length during the long months of the shoot, for consistency.

After his coffee–

Hold on a second.

He looks down at his phone on the table and smiles. Sorry. It's not three o'clock. It's *four* o'clock.

We're on Zoom. He's in Paris but sitting against a white wall. He could be anywhere, and often is.

Soon the daily shooting schedule will get more rigorous. The nighttime shoots will creep into the daylight hours. A 7:00 P.M. call might become a 2:00 P.M. call. He's doing physical training. He's doing fight scenes. Running. Leaping.

So those nights are about to get harder?

"I mean, 'hard'? Come on, man. We're making a movie!"

He makes a face, laughs.

"Hard?"

Paris is cloudy today, low sixties, and he's got the cap and a black zippered fleece. He always overpacks for these long expeditions–too many clothes, and a handful of books he won't have time to read but likes having with him anyway, though he did just fly through *Trouble Boys,* a biography of the Replacements that a friend gave him for his birthday.

It's another day in a place he doesn't live, working, sleeping, and, when he's not working, "working on work"–the time that goes into training, or running scenes, or developing the next project, or having conversations with people that might lead to something.

And if, amid the travel and the all-night shoots, he wakes up feeling crappy–tired bones, a little sore throat?

He makes the face again, a disapproving smile.

"So? Drink some hot tea with some lemon and honey in it. I don't know. Slap yourself in the face." He slaps himself in the face. "Stretch. Concentrate, man. *Concentrate.*"

He's fifty-seven years old. It's been more than two decades since the first *Matrix* movie came out. Twenty-seven years since *Speed*. Thirty-two–*thirty-two years!*–since he gave Ted "Theodore" Logan to the world in *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure.* And here he fucking is: filming the new *John Wick*, promoting the new *Matrix*. "Just trying to have a career," he says.

Some of his characters over the years can seem, on the surface, like the doofiest of boobs–Ted, of course, but see also his lovely performance in a movie called *The Prince of Pennsylvania.* Some are stone-faced and earnest

Page 70: Coat by **Giuliva Heritage;**
shirt and trousers by **the Row;** tie by **Charvet;**
boots by **Alden;** belt available at **Kiliwatch Paris.**
Page 71: Sweater by **Dries Van Noten;**
T-shirt available at **Le Vif,** Paris.
This page: Tuxedo jacket, vest,
and shirt by **Ralph Lauren;**
jeans, Keanu's own;
belt available at **Kiliwatch Paris.**

to the point of seeming implacable—Thomas Anderson in *The Matrix,* Wick, *Point Break*'s Johnny Utah. But: You always kind of know there's something else going on, some knowledge the guy possesses that no one else does. He knows something, and we stick with his characters through the strangest places because they aren't frightened, and we want to know what they know.

He says this just comes from good scriptwriting, or from the directors. "I'm just one of the paints," he says. And you think, *Uh-huh, yeah, but no.*

There's something he's not revealing.

Does Keanu know something we don't?

Keanu Being Very Much in the Moment No. 1

When Keanu was about twenty-four, Ron Howard cast him in 1989's *Parenthood* as a rambunctious teenage dude who liked to race cars and dated a cool, bratty girl played by Martha Plimpton. Playing Plimpton's younger brother: Leaf Phoenix, who later changed his name back to Joaquin and whose real-life older brother was Plimpton's real-life boyfriend.

That's how Keanu Reeves met River Phoenix.

River lived in Gainesville, Florida, at the time, less than two hours from Universal Studios in Orlando, where *Parenthood* was filming. Between his girlfriend and his little brother, River was on the set all the time. Plimpton and Keanu liked each other from the start, she introduced him to River, and then the three older kids—and sometimes Leaf, who was only about thirteen—started hanging out.

Onscreen, Keanu and Plimpton clicked as an earnest, tortured, heartsick young couple in ways that don't always result from the simple accident of casting.

"We just *liked* each other," Plimpton says, by way of explaining why Tod and Julie became one of the more memorable teen couples of the late eighties, which is saying something. "We were friends. We had a good time together. We went to Disney World. We took road trips. We danced to Michael Jackson's album *Off the Wall* in our trailer together. We *liked* each other."

Bill & Ted came out while they were there, and Keanu, Plimpton, and River all went to a theater to see it. They all took a motorcycle trip to—where was it, Key West? No one's sure—to see the indie-rock band the Feelies. Plimpton was just eighteen, but afterward at the bar she was drinking a beer. "We were playing pool, and Keanu went to go to the bathroom or something, and all the sudden the lights came on and I looked up and there was a cop," she says. "And the cop said, 'Can I see your ID, please?' And I was like, *Ohhh, shit, man.* And just then Keanu comes around the corner and goes, 'What did you do? Did you take a sip of my beer?' He tried to get me out of it."

WHEN HE WAS A LITTLE BOY, KEANU REEVES WOULD SOMETIMES GET on the subway all by himself and ride it to the end.

He was a latchkey kid, and he hung out with other latchkey kids, playing street hockey after school until dark in the tree-lined, bohemian section of Toronto called Yorkville. Or they would have chestnut fights. The chestnuts

This page: Shirt by **Dior Men;** T-shirt by **Brioni;** hat by **Borsalino;** watch by **Patek Philippe.** Opposite: Cardigan and trousers by **Brunello Cucinelli;** shirt by **Lemaire;** T-shirt available at **Le Vif,** Paris; boots by **Umit Benan;** watch by **Patek Philippe;** socks, Keanu's own.

would fall to the ground in their spiky green casings and you'd crack them open and inside would be this beautiful hard orb that the kids would pelt each other with.

But on some afternoons, he wandered off alone to take his rides. There were only two subway lines in Toronto, and he lived near the middle, where they met. One direction dipped down into a U and then back again, or he could head all the way east out to the Kennedy stop, or up and down—children rode for a quarter, and he could do this for hours.

At the end, when you had to get off, he would walk around in an unfamiliar part of the city, looking at the people and the buildings and the stores, an abstraction of the world he knew, similar but foreign—his own neighborhood in a weird dream.

He was never frightened. He wanted to see what was out there.

To this day, when he finds himself dropped in some new city—which he often does—Keanu feels comfortable more quickly than you or I would. He looks around, like a character in an Elmore Leonard story who just got off a bus, and he can find the high street or the good café or the pool hall in the seedy part of town. If you were dropped in a new city and feeling disoriented, you would want him with you. Even when he's lost, he's not lost.

Keanu Being Very Much in the Moment No. 2

"He's a listener," Sandra Bullock says. "And it drives. People. Crazy."

Bullock met Keanu on the set of *Speed,* which came out in 1994. They had friends in common. They had the same publicist, which sometimes meant they wound up at the same Hollywood event, and they'd get a drink after. They never *got-together* got-together—never. "Nope," she says. She has always maintained that *getting-together* getting-together would have ruined a great friendship.

"But who knows?" she says suddenly. "Keanu's a guy who, I feel like, is friends with every woman he's ever dated. I don't think there's anyone who has something horrible to say about him. So maybe we could have survived. I don't know. But we didn't have to survive anything. We just get to grow up together on parallel roads and tip our hats and meet for a dinner and try to work together. And the longer time goes on, the more in awe I am of the human being. Would I have been able to say that if he had dumped me and made me angry? Probably not."

A year or so after *Speed* came out, Bullock and Keanu were hanging out, talking about whatever, and somehow the subject of Champagne and truffles came up, which is not really a subject at all, but Bullock said, offhand, that she had never had Champagne and truffles. A nothing comment. "Really?" Keanu said. "Nope, never had 'em," Bullock said. The conversation wandered to other topics.

A few days later, Bullock was sitting in the living room of the little house she had bought—her first house—with a girlfriend. They were painting their nails. She heard an engine outside, which turned out to be Keanu's motorcycle. He rang the doorbell, and Bullock opened the door to find him there with flowers, Champagne, and truffles. He said, "I just thought you might want to

This page: Coat by **Alaïa;** T-shirt by **Brioni;** watch by **Patek Philippe;** belt available at **Kiliwatch Paris.** Opposite: Jacket, shirt, and trousers, **Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello;** T-shirt available at **Le Vif,** Paris; boots by **Alden;** watch by **Patek Philippe;** belt available at **Kiliwatch Paris.**

try Champagne and truffles, to see what it's like." He sat on the couch. Bullock poured some Champagne, and they opened the truffles. Keanu put his hands out, without a word, and Bullock painted his nails black, same as hers.

He didn't stay long. He had a date, in fact. He called his date, said he would be there soon, and left.

"That's what I mean that it drives you crazy," Bullock says. "When I first met him, I would spend as much time as I could filling a silence, just to feel comfortable. And the more I jibber-jabbered on, the quieter he would get. And I thought, *I don't understand what's happening! He's looking at me with eyes of confusion. He's quiet. Did I say something to offend him?* And then a day or two later, he would arrive with a note or a little package, saying, 'I thought about what you said.' And he would have his response."

Bullock, who sometimes speaks in spectacular streaks, is quiet for a moment. Then she says, "How many people do you know like that?"

"ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT WHILE I'M SCROLLING?"

A gray rain has started to fall in Paris, but inside Le Grand Colbert, waiters whip around carrying plates of roasted chicken and chateaubriand, people are laughing and ordering more wine, a little boy in a bow tie stabs a balloon-sized profiterole with his tiny fork–it feels like a holiday.

I ask Keanu how he came to relate or connect to others so well–it's a theme, something you read about him and that people keep telling me about him. Of course, no one is pious and lovely every moment. ("I shouldn't make him sound like some kind of Zen fucking Buddhist fucking monk," Martha Plimpton says.) Rather, it seems like something we learn.

"Is it?" he says. "I mean, of course that has to be a part of it. But I think there's a little nature/nurture in there. I guess what isn't nature/nurture?"

I really am interested in where it comes from for him.

"Yeah, in terms of the biological, psychological, cultural, genetic breakdown of my upbringing, I'm sure you could put together a bunch of stuff there, but that's why I mentioned the idea of nature, because even as a kid, I was pretty empathetic. Okay, wait–here we go. There was another list, but this was the new list. 'KR New Recommends Film List.' So let's see, it was like a mix of Reeves movies, and other stuff:

The Neon Demon,
A Clockwork Orange,
Rollerball,
The Bad Batch,
Dr. Strangelove,
Seven Samurai,
Amadeus,
Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead,
The Evil Dead,
Raising Arizona,
The Big Lebowski,
La Femme Nikita–the French version–
The Professional,
Young Frankenstein,
Blazing Saddles,
Monty Python and the Holy Grail,
The Outlaw Josey Wales,
The Road Warrior: Mad Max 2."

He pauses, still looking at his phone. Smiles. "So yeah, that was for her."

WHEN HE'S HOME FOR A STRETCH AND HAS A DAY WITH NOTHING TO do, he sometimes goes to the movie theater and sees two, maybe three movies in a day. He loves, loves, loves movies. Even on an off day while he's working–he went to see *Dune* the other night in Paris. ("Awesome.")

He's made sixty-eight movies, every genre. *A Walk in the Clouds:* treacly World War II romance. *Constantine:* supernatural demon stuff. *Bill & Ted Face the Music:* dudes at fifty. If he met someone who had never heard of him, never seen one of his movies, and wanted to get to know him, which three would he tell that person to start with? What is the Keanu Primer?

"Getting to know me, or getting to know my work? Because if you're get-

ting to know me–" he says, considering this. "I guess you could do it through my work." He frowns, thinking. "You're gonna give me *three*? Okay. Three films. Man. Um. [*Long pause.*] Oh my *gosh*. Three films. Okay, let's just start with *The Matrix*–and when I say *The Matrix,* let's do the trilogy–that's one. [*Pause.*] Then let's do *The Devil's Advocate.* And then let's do . . . we need something action-y in there, so let's do *Point Break*."

He sits back in his chair and folds his arms on his chest, tilts his head, and smiles on one side of his mouth.

"Start with the easy stuff."

The head tilt is a Keanu trick, which is perhaps the wrong word because it implies too much calculation, or deception, on his part. But it's more than a tic, because it has purpose. It *is* calculated. He does it in character, and he does it as himself, and the power of the head tilt is that it breaks the moment. If a moment is getting too serious or too weird or too boring, the head tilt tugs things back to reality, or Keanu's reality.

There is mystery in the head tilt, making him seem both very present and kind of *elsewhere* at the same time, and it makes us want to go along with him. ("He is a mystery, which makes him even more charming," Diane Keaton says.)

One time in the summer of 2019, Keanu went to a movie theater to see *John Wick 3.* "I didn't know if I was going to get the chance to do another one, and I just wanted to see if people liked it," he says. "It was cool when people started laughing during the knife fight in the opening." He laughs a mischievous, little-kid laugh, a *tee-hee* laugh. "I went with a friend. I was like, 'Let's go see *John Wick 3* before it goes.' I love *John Wick* movies! They're fun!" He is smiling, eyes wide, speaking faster, with more excitement–speaking almost as if he were not the actor playing John Wick. "I wanted to be with an audience, because I didn't know if I would get to see it again, or if another one would happen. I wanted to soak it in, to see it on the big screen–these movies are made for the big screen. We got popcorn–you gotta have popcorn. Some Peanut M&M's. Sweet and savory. Coca-Cola."

Head tilt.

He slips into an old-timey voice: "Watch a picture show!"

HE LEFT HOME AT EIGHTEEN NOT HAVING GRADUATED FROM ANY OF the four high schools he attended, and at twenty he left Toronto, driving a 1969 British racing-green Volvo 122 straight to Los Angeles. He read Philip K. Dick and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and William Gibson. Head-tilt kind of stuff. He read Shakespeare again and again.

Sometime around 1990, having appeared in a dozen or so movies already, he read a script that was inspired by *Henry IV* called *My Own Private Idaho,* by Gus Van Sant, the story of a couple hustlers finding their way in the world, desperate to get closer to the point of it all. He made that movie with River Phoenix. And then, six or seven years later, he read *The Matrix,* a screenplay by Lana and Lilly Wachowski.

"I just mainlined it," he says. "I thought"–Jimmy Cagney voice–"*Well, this is up my alley!* I'd had some of that thought training, reading about multi-personality universes and perspectives. So when I came across the script, thinking about this reality and this matrix, and then anime agents and the idea of thought control or what's reality, and virtual reality–yeah, I felt pretty at home in those.

"Those are stories and perspectives on storytelling that I prefer. There's always a relationship–a drama, a circumstance–in storytelling. But for me, it's cool when a work of art can entertain but also be inspirational or challenging or–I'm gonna bring up ye olde Bard–hold the mirror up. It's much more rewarding because it means that you're getting *into* it. Asking questions. Looking at the diamond and seeing which ways the light refracts and reflects. It can be everything from 'Be excellent to each other' in the circumstances of Bill and Ted, and those characters going against all odds, to *The Matrix,* which is, you know, 'What truth?' Confronting systems of control and thinking about will, and love, and who we are and how we are. Even back to *River's Edge:* a group of high school kids and a murder. What are the choices they make? And then the impact of technology in storytelling: playing *A Scanner Darkly,* or even *Johnny Mnemonic.* The journey of *Little Buddha,* working with Bertolucci and being introduced in a very very very very very very very broad way to Buddhist practice and thought. The notion of impermanence and connection to one's own body and thought and feeling, and sensorially your relationship to the world and meaning. And being confronted by one's own anatomical mind. Being introduced to meditation and what that is and to have mind-expanding experiences without any other stimulus besides intention, thought, and sitting. It really does kind of unfold to: Wow, there is a lot more going on! What's going on?"

No head tilt. Keanu shifts in his chair and stares straight ahead.

Keanu Being Very Much in the Moment No. 3

There's a moment in *Parenthood* when Reeves's dude-bro character, Tod, gives a terrific little speech to his girlfriend's mom, played by Dianne Wiest. Now, throughout most of the story, Tod is the mom's enemy, a wannabe man, maybe not so bright, stealing her daughter into adulthood. But then he does his monologue while drinking milk from the carton in her kitchen.

"I guess a boy Garry's age really needs a man around," Wiest's character says, referring to how Tod has become an unlikely father figure for her thirteen-year-old son.

"Yeah, well," Tod says, guzzling milk. He stops, points a pinkie at her: "Depends on the man. I had a man around. He used to wake me up in the morning by flicking lit cigarettes at my head. 'Hey, asshole! Get up and make me breakfast.' You know, Mrs. Buckman, you need a license to buy a dog or drive a car. Hell, you need a license to catch a fish. But they'll let any butt-reaming asshole be a father."

He gazes off for just a second, snaps to, and looks Wiest right in the eye. Then he shudders and makes a *bluurhrh* sound, as if he's shaking off a big insect or a bad memory, and says, "Well, I'm gonna pick up Julie."

Thirty-two years later, Plimpton remembers it: "That's him. That little shudder. He added that. That's his little touch. I thought it was fucking brilliant. It was hilarious. And so him. So dear. So. Dear. I just love that moment in the movie."

I ask Plimpton if she picked up any bit of wisdom from her time with Keanu, a lesson that's stuck with her. Without hesitating, she says, "Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I think it's a sense of forgiveness. Of myself."

TO HEAR OTHERS TALK ABOUT KEANU, HE SEEMS ALMOST CONFUCIAN in his ability to understand people. And to listen to them.

Is *that* the thing he knows?

People. That it's about the other people. He loves movies, yes. Loves stories. He can't stop working–sixty-eight films in thirty-five years. More stories, always more stories. *Ye olde Bard. Hold the mirror up.*

Bad things happen in life, inexplicable things. Keanu has seen people disappear: his father, who wasn't around; later, an unborn child, lost in the cruel randomness of prenatal mortality; a life partner, lost in a car accident. And his friend River, to a drug overdose, when River was twenty-three and Keanu was twenty-eight. In our Zoom call, I ask about him.

"He's a–"

Keanu cuts himself off and smiles downward. Head tilt. What tripped him up was the word *he's.* He is. Present tense.

"It's weird speaking about him in the past," Keanu says, almost thirty years after River's death. "I hate speaking about him in the past. So I almost always gotta keep it present. He was a really special person, so original, unique, smart, talented, fiercely creative. Thoughtful. Brave. And funny. And dark. And light. It was great to have known him. To–yeah. Inspirational. Miss him."

Bullock was close friends with Samantha Mathis, who by 1993 was dating River. All three had starred in the Peter Bogdanovich country-music movie *The Thing Called Love* that year. When River died, production had begun on *Speed.* Bullock was getting to know Keanu.

"I watched how Keanu grieved. And *oh,* did he grieve for his friend," she says. "He's very private, but he couldn't hide that. And just to see that a man like that

Clockwise from top:
Coat and shirt by **Umit Benan;**
T-shirt available at **Le Vif,** Paris;
shirt by **Dior Men;**
turtleneck sweater by **Brunello Cucinelli.**

was able to grieve. And I remember thinking, *God, if that's the tip of the iceberg of his depth, and his level of love and care for a friend*—that just draws you in."

Of course, we've all lost people. And we all react in different ways. For him it seems to inform everything he does: We're all in it together, searching for . . . whatever people search for.

"I think you do all you can for the ones you love," he says. "And that can turn into understanding a little bit of what other people go through. Being able to understand that, and share some of it, you see if maybe there are things that you can do. Knowing that perhaps you can offer something, if they're in a situation or in a moment that isn't clear, or they feel like they don't know how to be or what to do. If someone comes to you for help—that shared experience, where you can have a conversation. You haven't walked in their shoes, but you know a bit of the road that they've been on."

I tell him I like to think I've been there for people, but I truly don't know if I have.

"We can always do more. We can always do more. There's no ceiling on that." Head tilt, smile. "And you can't do everything. You can't do it all."

AFTER *JOHN WICK 4*, THERE WILL BE *JOHN WICK 5*. AFTER *THE MATRIX* *Resurrections*, who knows—the Wachowski sisters, Lana and Lilly, who wrote and directed the first three, said they weren't even going to do this one. (Lilly was not involved in *Resurrections*.) Keanu says there's no dream project simmering in the back of his mind, no favorite novel he wants to adapt and star in, no genre he's burning to try.

Just trying to have a career, he says.

(Bullock has a thought: "I would love nothing more than to do a comedy with Keanu before we die. Just laugh with him. He's funny. We can be seventy-five—it'll be even better then, like an old-people *Cocoon* thing. We play two funny old people. A road trip. Just put us in an RV as old people. It'll be the bookend of *Speed*! We'll just be driving really slowly. Pissing the world off. There's our movie.")

Winona Ryder, who has known Keanu for thirty-five years and starred with him in four movies, says it's the stories that keep him going. "He's always ready to explore uncharted landscapes of both character and storytelling," she says. "He understands that in telling the story, you have to allow that human mystery to live."

At Le Grand Colbert, I ask him if it made him self-conscious, my asking those questions about why people like him so much, and where his reputation for, well, *kindness* came from.

"Um," he says, smiling a little. "Yeah. I mean, I don't think I necessarily want to be like, 'Yeah!' I don't know." He busts out a kind of Ted Logan voice. "I'm just livin', man."

When we lose people in life, maybe it reminds us that life is short and all that.

He changes voices again, much quieter, and looking downward just a little bit: "Yeah, for sure." And then: "For sure."

"It's a cliché, I guess," I say.

He looks up right away and says, "No, but it's real."

He gathers his hat and a sweatshirt, everything black, and steps out to the street. He'll go directly from here to meet with a horse trainer. "There's a sequence—hopefully, knock on wood," he knocks on wood—"in *John Wick 4*, the opening sequence. John Wick is back in the desert on a horse. I'm going to hopefully be able to fast-gallop and run."

"And you know how to do that?"

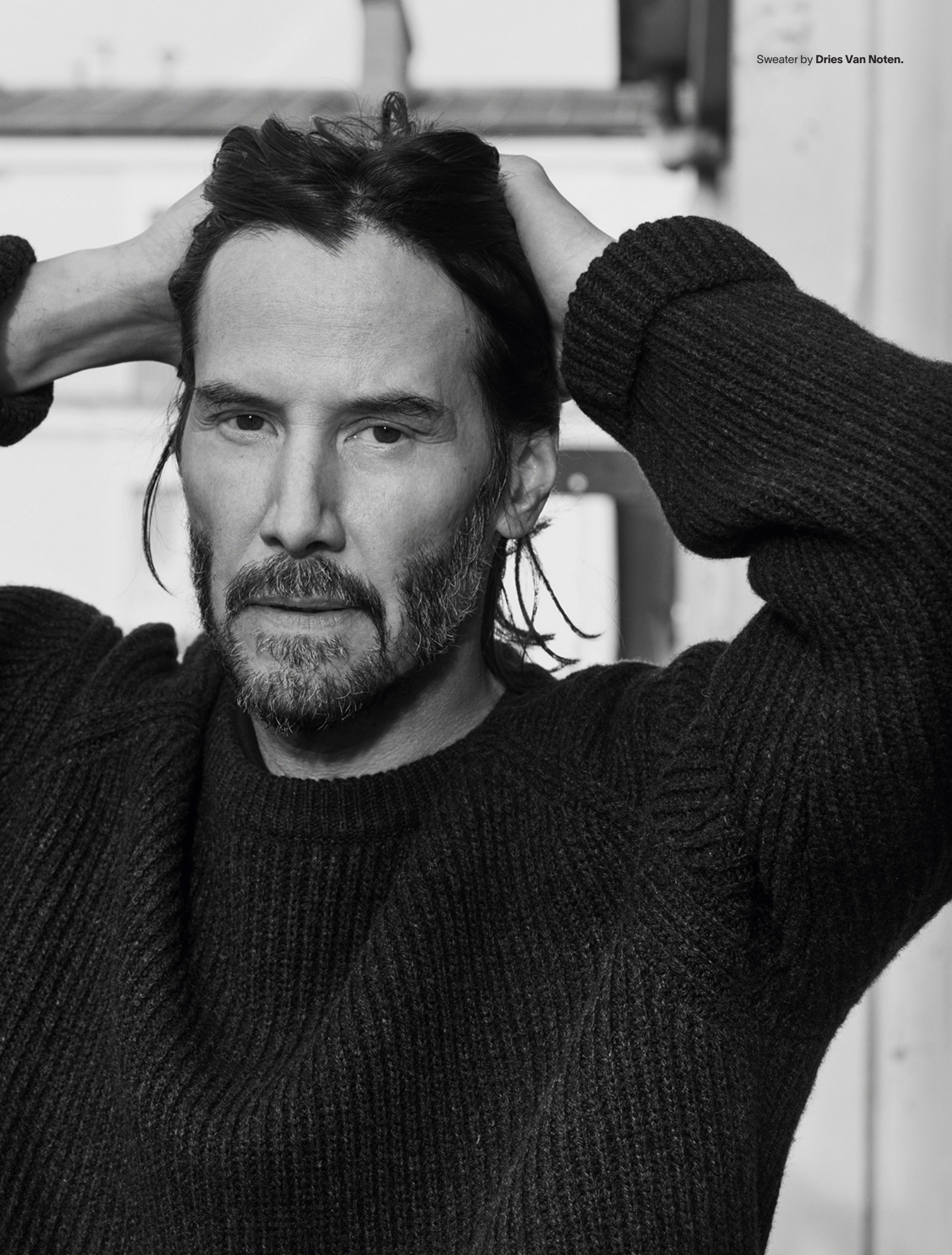
"*Ish*. That's why I'm going to training."

A few patrons follow him outside, apologize, and ask for a selfie. A few people don't apologize. The maître d' is trying to find out how long he'll be in town, because he wants to introduce him to someone; Keanu says softly, kindly, more politely than perhaps the man is to him, "Thank you, but probably not."

The man looks surprised. "Why not?"

"Time and work," Keanu says.

He walks down the wet street, past buildings hundreds of years old, on his way to see the horse trainer, so he can finish telling this story, and then another one, and then another one.



Sweater by **Dries Van Noten.**

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Wesley Snipes

ACTOR, 59, *MARINA DEL REY, CALIFORNIA*

Interview by MADISON VAIN

_**I WISH I** wasn't taught so much fear in my childhood. Fear of going outside. Of failure. Being a chocolate guy, you came with a lot of issues. Even walking into a room, walking into a party, being a dark-skinned guy had some very interesting issues around it.

_**FROM WHAT I'M** seeing, chocolate is a blast right now. I'm like, wow.

_**I WAS TEN** years old. My mom had given me twenty dollars to go to Harlem to buy a Chams de Baron shirt for Easter Sunday. As I'm walking, I see these guys with a nice table playing three-card monte—and you've got to remember, we had no money. No cell phones. There were times people wouldn't come back until the next day because they couldn't get home!

_**EVEN THE SMELL** of money changes people. We've had business deals where people collapsed—they lost their minds just over the thought. It wasn't even in their hands yet.

_**TECHNOLOGY IS TRYING** to catch up to the human brain. Some of the martial-arts teachings rely on the use of energy—what people might call clairvoyance or telekinesis. What's the difference between that and WiFi?

_**I THINK NEW YORK** is still suffering from the trauma of 9/11. People are still trying to reconcile the event. You can tell it in the way people walk around—even the colors they wear. It used to be that you would see people wearing very vibrant colors moving through New York City. Now it's all darker hues.

_**I DON'T THINK** Hollywood is broken. The history of Hollywood is crazy—there was a time when Hollywood people were considered on par with prostitutes and philanderers and swindlers. You wouldn't tell anyone you were in the movies! Look at where we at from that.

_**THEY START SENDING** me scripts where I'm the father, or the granddaddy. Or they're like, "Oh, let's do *The Expendables*." Most of the *Expendable* guys are seventy, eighty years old! So I do things to keep me active.

_**THERE ARE SOME** theories that have helped me deal with stress. Every lock

E FATHERHOOD HAS TAUGHT ME THAT I'M A MUCH MORE CONSERVATIVE

people were winning! I'm like, *Yo, if I win, I get more shirts.* I walked home with no shirt, no twenty dollars, terrified of my mom.

_**WHEN WE WERE** young, we played a game called round-up. It's kind of like tag. And we would play from the Bronx all the way down to the Statue of Liberty. Now,

_**JUST LIKE YOU** can delete a file in your computer, you can delete a file in your brain. You can delete an experience. Just literally say, "Delete," and it's out of there.

_**HAVING A BELIEF** system reminds me that there's a divine force moving in, within, around, and on my behalf for me. I've reinforced that in my thinking.

_**FATHERHOOD HAS TAUGHT** me that I'm a much more conservative guy than people believe.

_**YOU WILL NOT** call your mother by her first name. If Mom is nurturing you, cooking that wonderful food, making sure your clothes has a key. I remind myself of that all the time.

look sharp and clean—you owe her. And if you don't know what I mean, get over there and wash them dishes. Take the garbage out. Clean the kitchen. She shouldn't have to ask you.

_**FAME CHANGES** a person. You hear people say, "I ain't changed. I'm still the same." Well, that's going to be a problem. Fame demands a different mindset.

_**EVEN THOUGH I** wasn't behind bars, the thing I discovered in prison is that more people on the outside were locked up than the people on the inside. What's worse: to know that you are imprisoned and you're a slave or to not know that you're in prison and a slave—and be a slave?

_**I DO ONE** of the best tuna-fish sandwiches you ever had. The secret stuff I put in them—I'm telling you, you'll sit there and you'll eat the tuna fish with your finger.

_**I'VE GOT TO** learn how to be a movie star.

_**ON MY WORST** day, you could throw on some of the best of Larry Levan at the Paradise Garage mixes and I'm good. I ain't mad at nobody.

_**PEOPLE WILL GET** tired of mediocrity.

_**LIKE BAMBOO, YOU** can have flexibility but at the same time have tensile strength. Softness and hardness. At the same time.

CAITLIN CRONENBERG/TRUNK ARCHIVE

GUY THAN PEOPLE BELIEVE.

Snipes appears in the new Netflix limited-series crime thriller *True Story*, out November 24.

How *we* DR

JOSEF ADAMU,
creative director, 28

"I've always been into collegiate chic—vintage athletic threads—and I often pair those with elegant workwear. I'm all about a well-fitted silhouette."

THE TAKEAWAY:
Simple workwear exudes great style. But only if you get the fit just right.

JACKET BY **WOOLRICH;** SHIRT AND HAT BY **TODD SNYDER;** TROUSERS AND BELT BY **L.L.BEAN.**

WHEN IT COMES TO PUTTING THEMSELVES TOGETHER, MEN HAVE NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD. WHETHER YOU'VE A MIND TO DRESS UP, DRESS DOWN, OR FREAK OUT, THE CHOICES ARE ENDLESS AND EVERYWHERE. TO PROVE IT, WE PHOTOGRAPHED A BUNCH OF FASHIONABLE AMERICANS, EACH WITH A DEEPLY PERSONAL APPROACH TO STYLE, ALL IN THEIR OWN CLOTHES.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY AARON RICHTER

ESS *now*

GEORGE HAHN, actor, 51

"My dad was a suit-and-tie man, a huge influence. He always looked clean and handsome. I grew up in Cleveland in the '70s and '80s. There was a sense of occasion back then. We dressed up to go to dinner or even get on an airplane."

THE TAKEAWAY: All suits are not the same. Find a reliable tailor or a brand that fits your body shape perfectly. And stick to it like glue.

SUIT BY **BLACK LAPEL;** SHIRT BY **PROPER CLOTH;** TIE BY **CHIPP NECKWEAR;** POCKET SQUARE BY **GENERAL KNOT;** WATCH BY **MOUGIN & PIQUARD;** SHOES BY **ALDEN;** GLASSES BY **OLIVER PEOPLES.**

WATSON MERE, visual artist, 34

"The foundation of my sense of style comes from my father, who took pride in setting himself apart from the pack with his fashion. I remember seeing him walk my neighborhood in his clothes as if he was on a runway."

THE TAKEAWAY: Experimentation is key to building your personal style. Try things that shouldn't work together. You never know.

VEST BY **MOSHOOD CREATIONS;** SHIRT BY **SIMPLE PEOPLE FROM BYAS & LEON;** VINTAGE TROUSERS; SHOES BY **COMME DES GARÇONS PLAY CONVERSE;** HAT BY **KROONZ WEAR;** VINTAGE JEWELRY.

"WEARING A GREAT ENSEMBLE

VICTOR JEFFREYS II, impresario, 39

"I always wanted those hand-sewn, semi-cordovan high-tops from Feit. But I have realized that *wanting* an object is sometimes more fulfilling than actually having the object. There is some magic in that distance. I like the tension."

THE TAKEAWAY: Style is an ongoing adventure in self-expression. And color is the fastest way to communicate your youness.

COAT BY **FASHION NOVA X CARDI B;** JUMPSUIT BY **ZOLA KELLER;** SHOES BY **GEORGE COX X COMME DES GARÇONS;** SUNGLASSES BY **WARBY PARKER.**

GREGORY ZAMFOTIS, founder of Gregorys Coffee, **39**

"I describe my style as business casual evolved. My day-to-day requires that I look put together, but I want to present myself in a way that doesn't look cut from a catalog. Clothes are sort of my business card."

THE TAKEAWAY: The old suit-for-work rules went out the window a while ago. But that doesn't mean you are exempt from setting certain standards for yourself. Identify them and stick to them.

JACKET BY **ARC'TERYX;** SWEATER AND TROUSERS BY **STONE ISLAND;** HAT BY **SUPREME;** SUNGLASSES BY **FRIEDRICH'S OPTIK.**

SHIN SAKAINO, musician, **38**

"My clothes help to create the vibe I need that day. This look is imitating some high-end casual look and rock-musician style. I like the balance of elegant and wild."

THE TAKEAWAY: Mixing a vintage leather jacket with simple basics creates interesting tensions.

JACKET BY **COACH;** VINTAGE SWEATSHIRT AND SCARF; PANTS BY **DICKIES;** GLASSES BY **GUCCI.**

can create such A PALPABLE CONFIDENCE that's achieved entirely ON YOUR OWN TERMS." —ZACHARY WEISS

ZACHARY WEISS, head of brand for Outrageous 3PL, 29

"My Ralph Lauren alpaca trench coat is what I would grab from my closet if my apartment were on fire. I saw it at Harrods during a Thanksgiving trip a couple years ago. It's my favorite thing to wear out and about in New York, because I inevitably get heckled while wearing it."

THE TAKEAWAY: If you live somewhere cold, a topcoat is the piece the most people will see you in. It shouldn't be an afterthought.

COAT AND TURTLENECK SWEATER BY **RALPH LAUREN;** WRAP SWEATER BY **DEEP BLUE VINTAGE;** TROUSERS BY **BRUNELLO CUCINELLI;** SHOES BY **GUCCI.**

"EVERY TIME I THINK I'M THERE, something changes. Like many things in my life, MY WARDROBE IS FLUID AND ALWAYS EVOLVING."

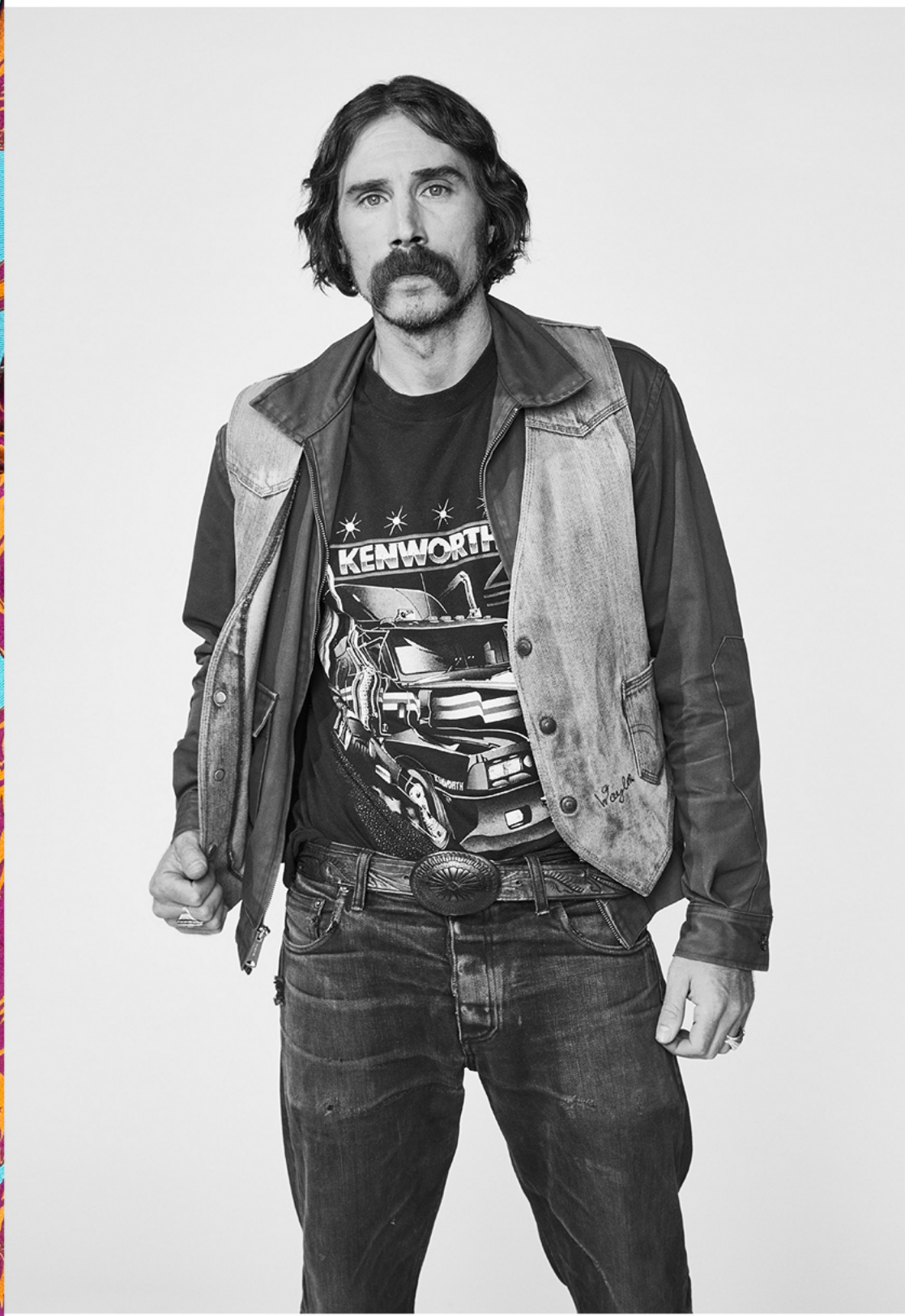
—GREGORY ZAMFOTIS

ARIAN JABBARY, attorney, 29

"I feel confident when I'm wearing clothes that feel natural on me—when things aren't contrived. Even when I'm in tailoring, I try not to take it too seriously. If you find yourself fidgeting with or thinking about an outfit throughout the day, it's become a costume."

THE TAKEAWAY: Putting your clothes together should always look effortless. But getting there requires effort.

SHIRT AND SWEATER BY **P. JOHNSON;** TROUSERS BY **ANGOULÊME;** TIE BY **VIOLA MILANO;** WATCH BY **ROLEX;** RING BY **L'ARTE NASCOSTA.**



JONNY NICOLS, operations for Left Field NYC, **40**

"I'm a little bit country with some East Coast grit. I grew up watching *The Dukes of Hazzard* and Clint Eastwood movies. I was around a lot of race cars, motorcycles, big rigs, and hot rods. A lot of good style influences to pick and choose from."

THE TAKEAWAY: Clothes are context—a clear manifestation of the interests and passions that fill your life.

JACKET AND JEANS BY **LEFT FIELD NYC;** VINTAGE TRUCKER TEE, LEVI'S VEST, AND BELT.

"MY WIFE is a huge inspiration TO MY STYLE. WE OFTEN SHARE OUR WARDROBE, TOO; she really is someone that I draw a lot from and VALUE HER OPINION."

—SAMEER SADHU

SAMEER SADHU, A&R, 34

"I always found it interesting that people dress from their shoes up. I decide on pants and build from that. I tend to find a pair and wear it straight for weeks, and then find inspiration from another combination and build around that for the next few weeks."

THE TAKEAWAY: Don't ever expect to achieve the perfect wardrobe. Good style is about being open to possibilities for change.

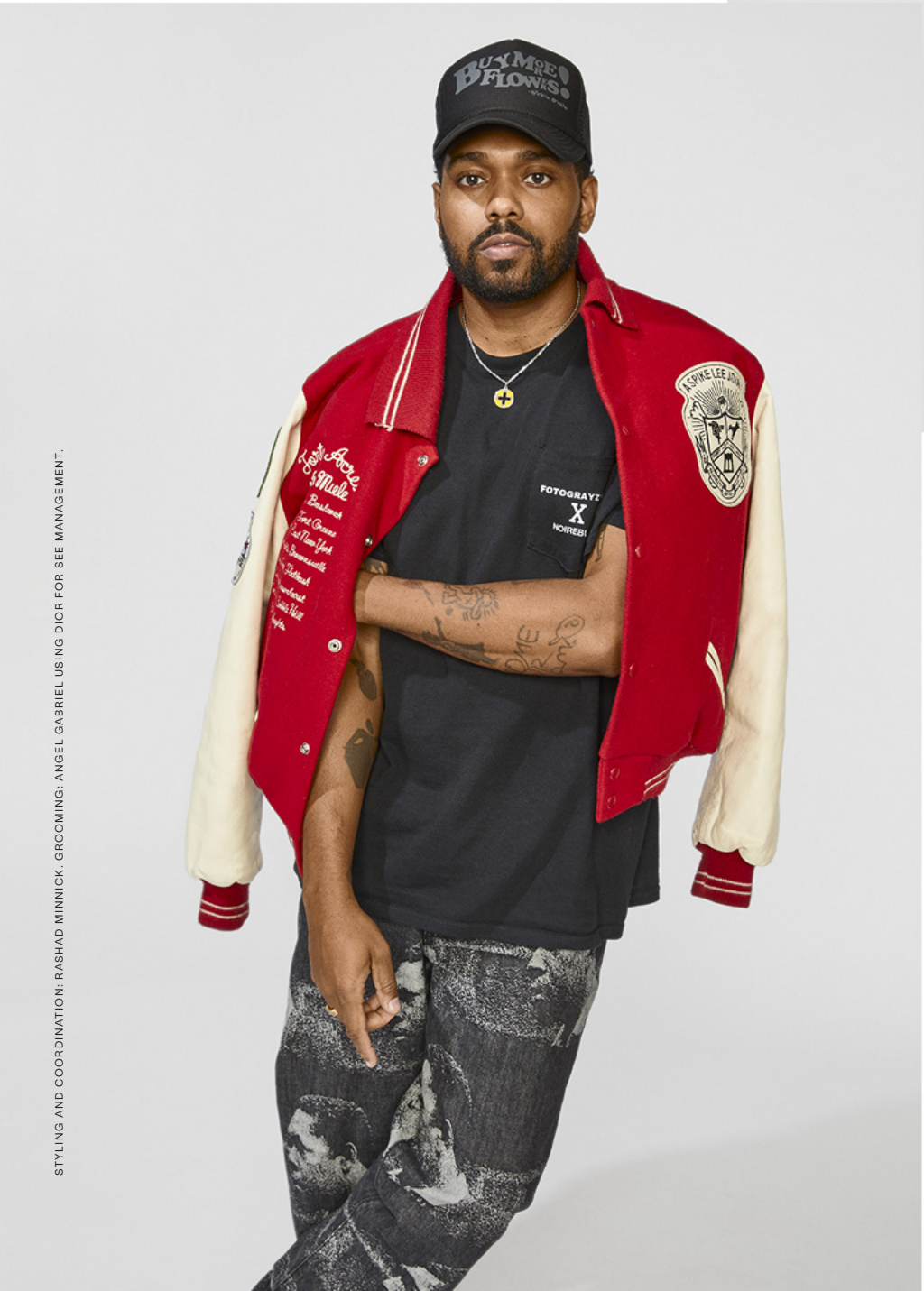
LEATHER JACKET BY **LANVIN;** JACKET AND SHIRT BY **BODE;** SILK TROUSERS BY **CRAIG GREEN;** SHOES BY **PRADA.**

STEVEN OTHELLO, creative director, **38**

"My red 40 Acres and a Mule letterman jacket holds a special place in my heart. When I was twenty, my first internship was at Ecko Clothing. They didn't pay me, but they gifted me this amazing jacket from Spike Lee's clothing line for my hard work. I've had the jacket for eighteen years. It reminds me to keep the same energy that got me here. Always work smart and be open to opportunities."

THE TAKEAWAY: Clothes with stories behind them are always more interesting and lasting than something you just bought on a whim.

LETTERMAN JACKET BY **40 ACRES AND A MULE;** T-SHIRT BY **NOIREBUD;** PANTS BY **SUPREME;** CUSTOM NECKLACE.



JAKE EMMONS, sales, **24**

"I find my clothes all over the place. I like to maintain balance, and I love mixing high and low. For example, if I buy a $300 pair of pants, I love wearing them with a shirt I got for five dollars off eBay or at the thrift store. Some items I need to act fast on buying or I'll miss out, but most of the time I'm digging through eBay for hours on end to find the perfect piece."

THE TAKEAWAY: High/low mixing is a great way to give your clothes personality without breaking the bank.

HAT BY **AIMÉ LEON DORE;** JACKET BY **BARBOUR X ENGINEERED GARMENTS;** CARDIGAN BY **ENGINEERED GARMENTS;** SHIRT BY **WRANGLER;** LOAFERS BY **BLACKSTOCK & WEBER X THROWING FITS.**

STYLING AND COORDINATION: RASHAD MINNICK. GROOMING: ANGEL GABRIEL USING DIOR FOR SEE MANAGEMENT.

At first there was longing. Then a pandemic. And then a chip shortage. But finally, in the middle of 2021, the unabashedly boxy Ford Bronco was unbridled and, whoo boy, you'd better

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEX BERNSTEIN

SADDLE UP!

hang on tight: This retro resurrection is the real deal and ready for a rumbly good time.

BY KEVIN SINTUMUANG

"CAN WE KEEP IT?" MY FIVE-YEAR-OLD daughter asks as I flip open the soft top to reveal nothing but blue skies. The long-awaited Ford Bronco 4x4, Esquire's Car of the Year, is not a pony, but it has that effect. We sit high above the grass beneath us—select the Sasquatch package and the Bronco gets jacked on gnarly thirty-five-inch wheels—the long, flat hood stretched out in front. It has the height to wade through water up to 33.5 inches deep or, in my case, navigate through puddles, over a large curb, and onto an open field in suburban New Jersey.

Unveiled in early 2020, the new Bronco was an instant hit. But then a pandemic happened, plus a chip shortage, so we all had to wait until this year to scratch that nostalgic itch. The model was introduced in 1965 as an off-roader to compete with the Jeep CJ. In 1994, it earned a notorious place in history when O. J. Simpson and his friend Al Cowlings led the LAPD on the infamous low-speed chase in Cowlings's white Bronco. Two years later, Ford stopped producing the car—not because of O. J. but to make room for the more family-centric Explorer.

The Bronco returns at a time when people are increasingly embracing the outdoors, and the car's burly nature taps into the deep-seated desires of the five-year-old in all of us. (I'll admit to hopping over more than one curb on our test drive.) Its design—basically two rectangles on top of oversize wheels—is primal, reminiscent of pre-K doodles of 4x4 vehicles on construction paper. Aside from the Jeep Wrangler (the Bronco's main competitor) and the Mercedes-Benz G-Class (which can cost four times as much), the Bronco, with its brash squareness, is a rarity in a world of swoopy, windswept SUVs, artfully straddling cuddly and butch. Upon seeing one in the wild, little kids will scream, *"Cuuute!"* and dudes will moan, *"Whoooa!"*

While the Bronco will probably win most of us over with its boxiness alone—more than two hundred thousand have been preordered—its ability to be easily taken apart will convince anyone on the fence. The roof can be thrown open with a bit of muscle or fully removed with some easy-enough delatching and unscrewing. The doors can be detached with a socket wrench, like a Wrangler's. But unlike a Wrangler's, they can be slipped into protective bags and stored in the trunk instead of, say, tossed on your lawn. Stripped-down is the Bronco's ultimate mode for serious off-roading or maximum peacocking as you roll into the Sonic parking lot for some tots.

What the Bronco does best, hands down, is recapture that feeling of playing with a brand-new toy with endless possibilities and configurations (there's already an ecosystem of merch and aftermarket parts), and its retro-perfect design is one that my daughters will likely see in a museum one day. Top down, arm hanging out the window, long road ahead. *Can we keep it?* We sure can.

PRICE
Starts at $30,795 for two-door,
$34,945 for four-door

ENGINE
300 hp turbocharged
2.3-liter four-cylinder, or
330 hp twin-turbo 2.7-liter V-6

MILES PER GALLON
(COMBINED/CITY/HIGHWAY)
Four-cylinder: 21 / 20 / 22
Six-cylinder: 19 / 18 / 20

young &

Australian-born actor Jacob Elordi takes a break from filming season two his rising fame—including what it's like when millions of teenagers fall in

restless

of HBO's *Euphoria* to head into the woods in this winter's boldest outdoor styles. Along the way, he reflects on love with you. **BY BRADY LANGMANN PHOTOGRAPHS BY GIA COPPOLA STYLING BY ALISON EDMOND**

Left: Jacket (on seat, $5,600), overalls ($6,500), and sweater ($1,450) by **Gucci;** boots ($370) by **Danner;** washer bracelet ($215) by **Degs & Sal;** mixed chain bracelet ($275), mesh ring ($350), and hinged ring ($350) by **Title of Work;** dagger band ring ($395) by **John Hardy.** Right: Jacket ($870) by **Herno Globe;** sweater ($1,675) by **Versace.**

Above: Jacket (as pillow, $2,300), sweater ($1,250), and leggings, **CELINE by Hedi Slimane;** mixed chain bracelet ($275) by **Title of Work;** washer bracelet ($215) by **Degs & Sal.** Below: Sweater ($1,750), shorts ($350), and scarf ($695) by **Dolce & Gabbana;** sandals ($150) and socks ($18) by **Birkenstock;** hinged ring ($350) by **Title of Work;** feather ring ($95) by **Degs & Sal.**

Above: Jacket ($3,200), vest ($1,250), and joggers ($8,500) by **Hermès;** sandals ($150) by **Birkenstock;** socks ($22) by **American Trench;** mixed chain bracelet ($275) by **Title of Work;** washer bracelet ($215) by **Degs & Sal.** Below: Jumpsuit ($2,190) and sweater ($2,750) by **Prada;** tank (pack of three, $43) by **Calvin Klein;** necklace ($600) by **Title of Work.**

This page: Jacket (on chair, $3,290), sweater ($980), and shorts ($1,590) by **Fendi;** hat ($75) by **Chamula;** boots ($1,525) by **Hermès;** socks ($20) by **American Trench;** gloves ($150) by **Hestra.** Opposite: Jacket ($870) by **Herno Globe;** vest ($700) by **Herno;** sweater ($1,675), shorts ($775), and scarf ($2,550) by **Versace;** dagger band ring ($395) by **John Hardy;** tank by **Calvin Klein.**

"I'M JUST BURNING SAGE," SAYS JACOB ELORDI AS HE TAKES A lighter to the business end of a smudge stick. His voice, transmitted over Zoom from his home in Los Angeles, is so deep that the words tend to blur together, as if this six-foot-five Aussie, in a baseball cap and a banana-yellow T-shirt, has been possessed by the spirit of Eeyore. Or it might just be how he's feeling today. "A little down in the dumps," he says. He dearly misses his family back in Australia: his brother and sister, both older, and "my best friends"—his parents. He's in production on season two of *Euphoria*, HBO's acid trip of a series that gives Gen Z the prestige treatment. "Work is the North Star. As long as I'm doing that, I'm good. I can be anyone, anywhere, from any family," he says. "But it's the in-between moments. There are days when you just sit at home, and those days are tough. Because it's like, 'I have a swimming pool and a television and a couch and a tree, and I can't have Sunday lunch with my mum.' "

Above him hangs a painting done by a friend of a boxing match, two blurs forever throwing jabs at each other. When talking, Elordi pulls on the hem of his shirt; when listening, he pinches the flesh of his cheek. You get the sense that there's a separate conversation racing through his head. But that goes away when talk turns—inevitably—to the man's eyebrows. They're thick Basque brows, paternally inherited. "I used to be so self-conscious of having a unibrow," he says. "I would make my mum tweeze out the middle. I was fifteen and terrified of all body hair." He finally cracks a smile. "Since I've become vain, I do brush them from time to time before leaving the house. Which really kills me, when I reach for that little brush."

On *Euphoria*, Elordi, twenty-four, plays Nate Jacobs, a high school quarterback who struggles with an abusive father—in addition to his own multitude of demons. On set, the actor has the heavy task of living in the head of a jock who, in season one, nearly pummels a guy to death, blackmails a classmate with her nude selfies, and projects his confused sexuality in every direction but inward. Elordi reveals that in season two, "there's a lot more time in his house, with his family."

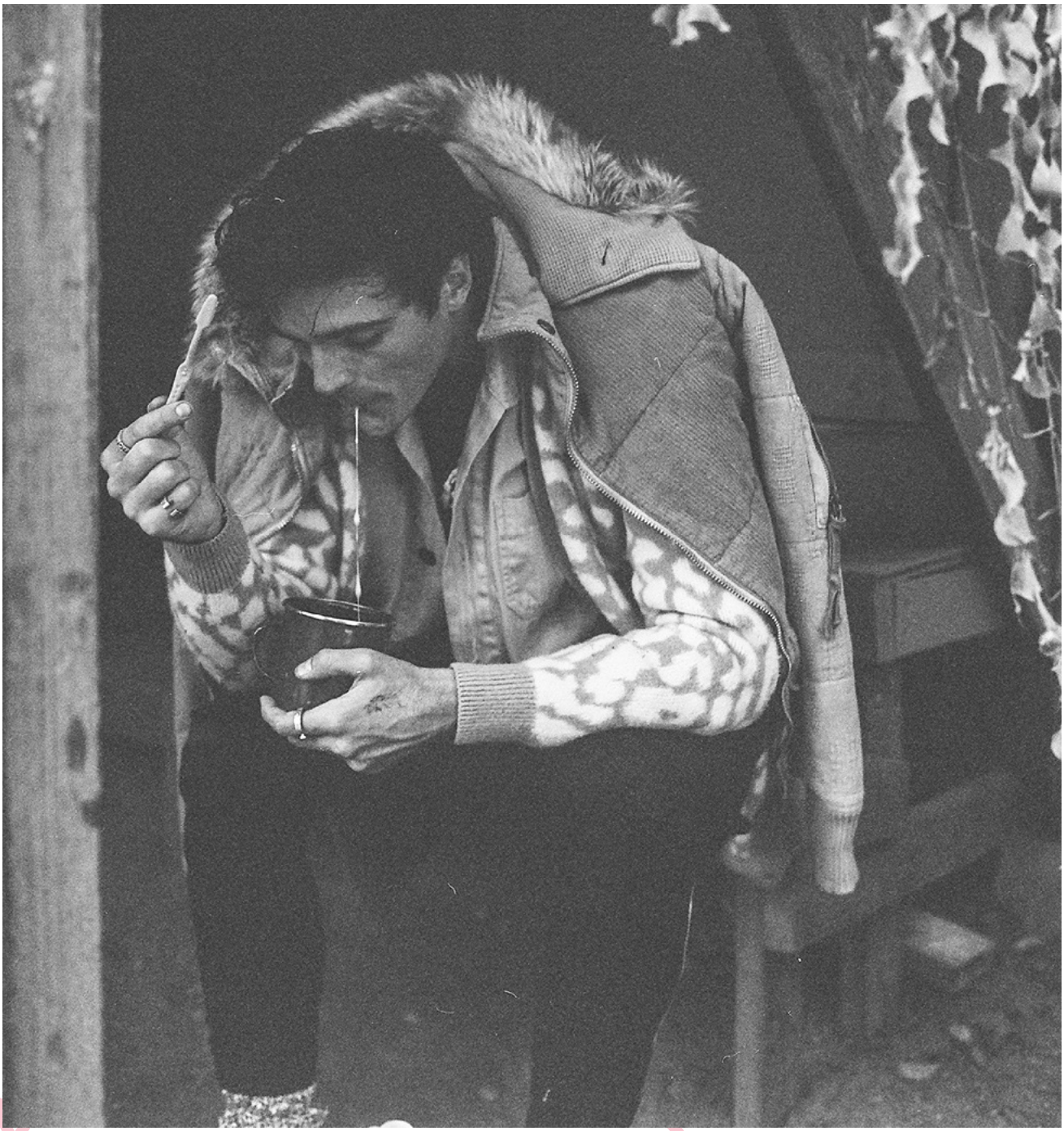
To him, the idea of spending more time at home with his family—as he did during the worst of the pandemic—reminds him of everything that's missing. "I've been like, 'Why don't you just leave?' And then I'm like, 'Oh, fuck, because I can't. I literally can't.' "

For the record, he's not talking about contractual obligations. When Elordi was a child, his dad called him Jacob the Champion. "I would never stop anything, whether it be running or riding a bike up a hill," he says. The nickname still pops up in his brain like an inspirational Whac-A-Mole. "To this day, I will never, ever stop. Even if I'm in the gym or something silly like that, I can still hear 'Jacob the Champion.' It's almost to the point of an OCD, where I'm like, 'If I don't do this last pushup. . . .' "

Luckily, Elordi has reached a spot where he's not tallying how many fans and followers will be won or lost by his next role. "I don't care enough about being a celebrity to make movies that I don't really care about," he says. He will have a small part opposite Ben Affleck and Ana de Armas in Adrian Lyne's *Deep Water* (out January 14). When I ask if he'd ever stand in front of a green screen and play a superhero, he tells me that he nearly did, that the project was to be directed by Theodore Melfi (*Hidden Figures*), and that they'd hit it off from the jump. "I was like, 'Dude, I'll fucking fly around and shoot lasers for you any day,' " Elordi says. But nothing materialized. "I don't know if I can talk about it, because it's gone away now."

You've probably gleaned that Elordi's matured about five decades in the nearly four years since he first made his name, as the teddy-bear boyfriend in Netflix's teen rom-com trilogy *The Kissing Booth*. No one prepped him for the attention of millions of teenagers armed with Netflix subscriptions, plus a couple of Instagram-friendly relationships—with his *Kissing Booth* costar Joey King and, in a rumored fling, his Emmy-winning *Euphoria* costar Zendaya. I ask if being with his current partner, Kaia Gerber, the daughter of Cindy Crawford and a model in her own right, has helped with his loneliness. Elordi rubs his ears and says with a half grin, "Oh, no, I don't really want to talk about my relationship," then hurtles the interview train in a different direction.

"I used to worry a lot about what people thought about me, and about the kind of actor I was because of the movies I'd made," he says. "I just felt very corny, and I felt like I had to prove to everyone that I was a serious actor. I felt terribly misunderstood." Elordi thinks for a second about where he's going, looking up and to the left, past the camera. He has it now. "I got guarded for a little while, because I made a teen movie," he says. "I don't want to come to the end of my career and have not been candid and said what's going on and how it feels. So this is the start of me being open, I guess." He flashes a peace sign and logs off.



FOR STORE INFORMATION SEE PAGE 119. GROOMING: SABRINA BEDRANI FOR DIOR BEAUTY AT THE WALL GROUP.
PRODUCTION: DANIELLE GRUBERGER FOR SEDUKO PRODUCTIONS. SET DESIGN: NATALIE ZIERING.

Opposite: Puffer jacket ($1,800), work jacket ($1,375), and trousers ($1,625) by **Greg Lauren;** cardigan ($3,100) by **Dior Men;** vintage tank ($198), available at **the Society Archive;** socks ($18) by **Filson;** mesh ring ($350) and hinged ring ($350) by **Title of Work;** dagger band ring ($395) by **John Hardy.** This page, above: Jacket by **Boss;** sweater ($1,250) by **Moncler Collection;** shorts ($460) by **Palm Angels x Missoni;** balaclava ($555) and gloves ($300) by **Missoni;** boots ($120) by **Timberland;** socks ($30) by **Pantherella;** mixed chain bracelet ($275) by **Title of Work;** washer bracelet ($215) by **Degs & Sal.** Below: Sweater (on chair, $540) and trousers ($1,100) by **Aknvas;** shirt ($845) by **Brunello Cucinelli;** tank by **Calvin Klein;** hat ($240) by **Isabel Marant;** socks ($28) by **Anonymous Ism;** mixed chain necklace ($600), mixed chain bracelet ($275), mesh ring ($350), and hinged ring ($350) by **Title of Work;** washer bracelet ($215) and feather ring ($95) by **Degs & Sal;** dagger band ring ($395) by **John Hardy.**

THE RELUCTANT MAN'S GUIDE TO STARTING THERAPY

1 *Open Your Mind to the Possibility...*

BY NOW, YOU KNOW it's okay—healthy!—to talk about your feelings. But do you know it's okay—and encouraged, by us, in these pages—to pay someone to listen to a weekly (or twice-monthly or thrice-weekly) spelunking through your psyche? Probably not, if the numbers are any indication: ***Men are half as likely as women to seek help for their mental well-being.*** That's true not just here in 'Murica—that's true around the globe, across races and ethnicities and ages. We're emotional escape artists, masters at avoiding our inner discomfort. Some of us hoover drugs and alcohol, seek thrills through bad behavior, withdraw from the world. But the common narrative leaves out a few crucial details. The research shows that men do want to heal, we do accept help, and we do share our fears and doubts and moments of darkness. We just prefer to do it on our own terms, and—here's where it gets tricky—we often don't know how to articulate what those terms are. (More about that on page 105.) So, to all you therapy skeptics, you on-the-fencers, and you true believers alike: Join us as we knuckle-drag our way on this fifteen-step tour across the therapeutic landscape.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BELA BORSODI

2

...And Not Only When THERE'S A CRISIS

BY DREW MAGARY

I DIDN'T KNOW HOW badly I needed therapy until I got therapy. I thought I was good. If I yelled at my kids at the dinner table, well, that's because they were ungrateful for the meal that my wife and I had prepared for them. If I raged out in my car after spending more time than I wanted to in line inside a cramped U-Haul office, that's because fuck U-Haul and fuck those other customers. And if I smashed a pasta bowl because it wouldn't easily fit into the lower dishwasher rack, that was because of shoddy design on the part of Big Pasta Bowl. All that anger, I thought, was justified. The world was wronging me at every turn, when it should have had more compassion for a guy who had just suffered a catastrophic and inexplicable brain hemorrhage that had left him comatose for two weeks and deaf in one ear forever.* Everyone else was the problem, not me.

That sounds ludicrous in retrospect, because it is. But I couldn't hear that in my mind at the time. All I could hear were grievances that, in reality, were just nattily attired excuses. I also figured that if I had mental-health problems, I—a man with clinically diagnosed brain damage—would be able to recognize and address those concerns on my own. Just about the most tired, American Guy attitude you could have toward mental health, especially your own. Guys are always inclined to think they're fine, even when they clearly aren't. And we're too proud to listen when loved ones tell us, "You need help." We wanna do it all ourselves, and we don't trust others to do the job.

It took me a very long time to put that trust in my loved ones. But once I listened to them and started seeing a therapist, a social worker named Gaby who practices less than a mile from my own home, it was like putting on the right prescription glasses for the first time in my life. I could *see* myself. When Gaby asked me why I'd acted the way I acted, I felt ridiculous trying to justify any of it to this educated stranger. After only a few thorough, sometimes uncomfortable sessions, I could see myself as my loved ones were seeing me: an unhinged man demanding the world listen to him instead of wisely realizing that all he had to do, from the very beginning, was instead listen to it. And that clarity gave me the power to *stop* being that man and to be someone new. Someone better.

But I am not "cured." I still see Gaby every month. There's always work to be done on yourself, and you can't do that work unless someone else helps you see what the exact job at hand is. I was too damaged and angry to know that. I'm glad I had people in my life to show me. So I'm asking you to listen to me: If someone tells you to get help, or if you yourself think you might need it but haven't ginned up the motivation to actually get it, go. Give it a try. You might be astounded by what you see.

Read all the gory details in Magary's new book,* **The Night the Lights Went Out: A Memoir of Life After Brain Damage.

3

Know That YOU'RE NOT a Lost Cause

RAISE YOUR HAND IF you've been told you're out of touch with your feelings. There's a reason for that: Epidemiologically speaking, it's true. According to a recent systematic review of nearly forty studies on masculinity and depression, men deny mental-health concerns and don't ask for help. And the more a guy adheres to traditional masculine norms, the more likely he is to experience distress and the less likely he is to seek treatment.

At our worst, we act violently toward ourselves and others. Men constitute three quarters of the deaths by suicide in the U.S., and we commit more than four fifths of the homicides. In 2020, the National Domestic Violence Hotline received 636,900 calls, chats, and texts.

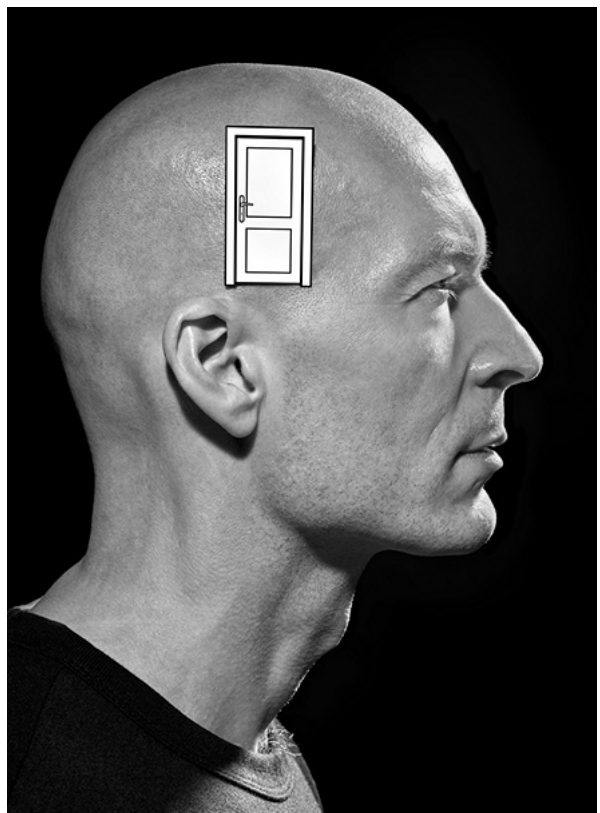
Addressing the problem is made more difficult by the medical community's default view of men that abnormalizes our most common characteristics. "It has become customary for researchers and clinicians to target pathology and what is 'wrong' with men in order to address these issues," the review's authors write, "rather than to emphasize the positive aspects of being a man."

But there's hope for a better tomorrow. In contrast to "the typical and popular assumption that men rarely engage in help-seeking behaviors," the authors write, their findings "reflect a more nuanced conclusion that men will seek help if it is accessible, appropriate, and engaging." What works well for us? Let's turn again to the research.

MEN RESPOND WELL TO . . .

- **Short-term,** problem-solving-centric treatments, the most common of which is cognitive behavioral therapy, or CBT.
- **Therapeutic relationships** "built on trust and defined by open, collaborative partnership," as the review's authors put it. We don't like our therapist to have "a paternalistic style."
- **Active language.** We don't love phrases like "being in therapy" and "receiving help."

So get out there, friend, and own your emotions.



GROOMING: SANDRINE VAN SLEE USING ORIBE FOR ART DEPARTMENT. CASTING: ALICIA BRIDGEWATER FOR CASTINGBYA.COM.

4 find! your! therapist!

*You and you alone bear the burden of therapist shopping. But where to begin? There's no comprehensive list, no Yelp for shrinks. (*Psychology Today*'s directory is the closest thing, and it's a good starting point.) Reading up on the immense range of available therapies—modalities, in therapy-speak—can feel like guzzling a bowl of bland alphabet soup: ACT, BA, BT, CBT, DBT, EMDR, IPT, MBT, PE, PFPP, and on and on. If that sounds tasty, dig in. The more familiar you are with what the acronyms mean, the better your chances of finding the right fit.*

But you don't need to teach yourself Psych 101. Studies have shown time and again that ***the most reliable indicator of therapeutic success is good chemistry.*** *"Therapy works best when you have a good working alliance with your therapist, when you feel comfortable opening up and trusting them," says* **John Markowitz, a professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia University.**

5 Review Their Credentials

SINCE ANYONE CAN call themselves a counselor—literally, that's true—and since the "therapist" title applies to a mind-boggling range of education levels and specialties, you need some quality control to weed out the quacks. With all due respect, we don't endorse the life coaches, the spiritual healers, the mental-health content creators. Not that there's anything wrong with them!* If they provide you with mental respite, great. But what they're not providing you with is professional mental-health care.

As you pore over lists of providers, keep an eye trained on their credentials: If they lack a master's or a doctorate from an accredited school (more common than you'd think), or if they aren't licensed to practice (not as common but worth double-checking via the relevant licensing board in your state), find someone else.

Just don't be that guy who refuses to see anyone without a terminal degree. (Unless, that is, you're seeking help for what you suspect is a serious mental illness, in which case you should put down this magazine and call your physician for advice.) If you need someone to help you through a rough patch or are dipping your toe into the therapeutic waters for the first time, a social worker (likely with a title that ends with an L.C.S.W. or L.S.W., though there are others) can be as competent as someone with a fancier degree—your Ph.D.'s, your Psy.D.'s, or, for psychiatrists, your M.D.'s. Remember: The most important ingredient for success is compatibility between you and your (credentialed, licensed) therapist.

**Unless it's Tony Robbins. That guy's the worst.*

CONFIRM YOUR COVERAGE

You've found a therapist who's a good fit (congrats) only to discover that they charge $300 per fifty-minute session—six dollars a minute—and don't take insurance. WTF?!

WHY IS THERAPY SO DAMN EXPENSIVE?

Because it's the only way many therapists can keep the lights on. Insurance companies often don't reimburse mental-health providers at rates that provide a livable, or at least a desirable, wage. So many therapists go into private practice, refuse all insurance, and charge what the market will bear. And it's a supplier's market: We, the patients, are nearly six times as likely to see an out-of-network provider for mental-health care as for any other medical service.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE INSURED

Start with a list of in-network providers, which should be available on your insurer's website. Fair warning: Those lists can be notoriously out-of-date, so you may want to call your insurance company, suffer through its Muzak, and speak directly with a representative. While you're at it, ask whether you're able to claim partial reimbursement for out-of-network therapy. You'll never pay as little as your co-pay for in-network care, but anything to bring down the cost is worthwhile.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU AREN'T

Can you pay out of pocket? Cool. If you can't swallow the full rate, ask if they offer a sliding-scale fee. Or check out nearby universities and community health centers. Consider group therapy, too. Bonus: potential new friends!

7 Weigh THE INEQUALITIES

The system isn't built equitably, but plenty of people are nudging it into 2022

A FEW OF THE PROBLEMS...

Access to in-person care is wildly uneven. A 2018 study found that U. S. metropolitan areas had more than three times the number of psychologists per capita that rural counties had, and 61 percent of rural counties lacked a single provider. There are similar discrepancies for social workers and psychiatrists.

White practitioners are the status quo. As of 2019, the most recent data available, 83 percent of psychologists were white, according to the American Psychological Association. That's a steady improvement in diversity over the past two decades; in 2000, the psychology workforce was 90 percent white. Since then, the number of psychologists of color has more than doubled. But that's far from reflective of the U. S. population, which is 60.1 percent white. Seven percent of psychologists are Hispanic; 4 percent are Asian; 3 percent are Black.

And the system was designed to serve white-people problems. "Until the seventies, we generally had culturally biased ways of handling problems," **Stanley Sue, a professor of clinical psychology at Palo Alto University,** says about his profession. "When people were trained many years ago, and maybe even more recently, you were trained toward one set of skills for helping people. The programs weren't malicious; that's just the way it was. And that set of skills does not necessarily work out for a lot of individuals." Sue, who received his Ph.D. from UCLA in 1971, continues: "There are exceptions, but in general, treatment has not been geared toward minority groups. If you come from Asia, if you have a strong Hispanic background, if you're Black, you're not well-served now."

...PLUS A FEW SOLUTIONS

Sue has spent his career "finding out the kinds of problems that ethnic minorities have in receiving services, their response to treatment, and how that treatment can be modified so that it's more effective," as he puts it. "A lot of researchers have shown that when working with ethnic clients, if you modify your treatment to respond to the culture of that individual, their outcome improves."

Cultural competence, it's called. The idea is that your therapist doesn't need to look like you or come from the same background, but that they should have an understanding of, or at least an openness to understanding, your particular worldview. "A culturally competent therapist understands a culture while also understanding that not everyone is a stereotype. You know that the client is not a caricature of an abstract culture but rather that their culture is a context in which you judge their individual differences."

There are now a ton of good resources tailored to serve certain communities—Black Men Heal, Asian Mental Health Collective, InnoPsych, Latinx Therapy, and many more—which, when considered alongside the explosion of teletherapy (see right), makes this a golden age for accessing therapists from virtually any background.

In the beforetimes, clinicians were required by law to be licensed by the state in which they practiced. Toward the start of the pandemic, many states waived these regulations; slowly but surely, many states are rolling back those waivers. Check out your state's status at psypact.com.

NOT CONVINCED YET? CHECK OUT YOUR HOMETOWN TEAM.

WE'RE AS SURPRISED AS YOU ARE: Therapists have become all but a must-hire for professional sports teams. The NBA led the charge, mandating in 2019 that all thirty of its teams have a licensed mental-health professional on staff. But other leagues have caught on, and now some of the toughest athletes on the planet are learning to express their emotions in constructive ways. Can you picture a defensive tackle working with a shrink on self-acceptance? Of course you can. To learn more—and to pick up a few tips ourselves—we spoke to **Carrie Hastings, the in-house psychologist for the Los Angeles Rams.** —BRADY LANGMANN

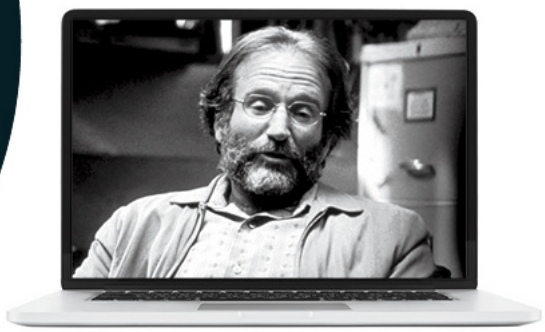
WHAT GETS THEM IN THE DOOR
"At the beginning of the season, coach Sean McVay speaks to the team and encourages them to connect with me if they need to. With athletes, if they know something will help their performance, they'll come. But they'll say, 'I don't want to talk about anything else, but we can work on this.' Fine, we'll start there, with performance. Maybe they're not ready to do any more than that. But once I'm able to build trust? I've never had an athlete not come back."

SIGNS A PLAYER MIGHT NEED HELP
"I will notice it in their play. When things aren't great, often they're not as focused. They may not be as quick. They're not as communicative.

YES, IT'S JUST LIKE *TED LASSO*
"A guy came in for the first time and went to lie down on the couch. He's like, 'So what do I do? Do I just lie down here?' I said, 'No, you don't need to do that.'"

THE GIFT OF GROUP THERAPY
"We started a weekly injured-reserve group this year. Hearing stories from their peers, seeing each other be vulnerable—that helps them feel comfortable and safe. Whether or not they express whatever they might be going through in that moment, it may lead them to connect with one another later."

THE FINAL CALL
"I want readers to know that their role models, guys who they think are the toughest, coolest, baddest around, they're in therapy. If they can do it, so can you."



Don't *Fear* Therapy-by-Internet

TELETHERAPY has been around for years; peer-reviewed studies, lots of them, show that it's just as effective as in-person treatment. But it took a pandemic to set off the massive surge in platforms and popularity—because how else would we have seen our shrinks in 2020?—and it's here to stay. Ninety-six percent of therapists now offer at least some of their services remotely, according to a recent American Psychological Association survey. And with good reason: It's so damn convenient for all involved.

Plus, men take to it particularly well, says **Antonieta Contreras, a therapist in New York City.** She has seen her male patients open up more readily onscreen than they ever had in her office. "Being in their own space may be the invitation to be vulnerable, to express their emotions," she says. "Instead of feeling exposed, they feel safe." We're also less liable to bail: "I work with a lot of busy guys, and if before they had the excuse of being too busy as a justification for canceling a session, now they don't."

SMS & CHILL

BETTERHELP

Test Driver: Justin Kirkland

How It Works: You fill out a questionnaire—who you are, what you are (and aren't) looking for. There are plans for text-based communication, video sessions, and a combination of the two. It also offers need-based financial aid.

What I Liked: For a screen-based service, it's deeply personal. I didn't jell with my first therapist; I easily switched and struck gold. Texting affords daily direct access to your therapist without the concern that you're overdoing it.

What I'd Change: If for whatever reason a payment doesn't go through, you're locked out of all communication with your therapist. BetterHelp doesn't handle insurance claims, so that's on you.

Price Per Session: $60–$90 per week for unlimited communication with your therapist

Takes Insurance? No.

See Also: Talkspace, Brightside, Calmerry

HIDE YOUR MUG

AMWELL

Test Driver: Brady Langmann

How It Works: It's easier than placing an Amazon order: Enter your info, click the behavioral-health tab (they offer other medical services), and make an appointment with a provider of your choosing.

What I Liked: It'd be hard *not* to find a therapist with next-day availability. I could hide my face onscreen; as of this writing, that's unique among the competition.

What I'd Change: There wasn't enough info about each therapist to secure confidence in my selection. (I threw a dart to make my pick; I liked him!) The onboarding process felt like the digital equivalent of a hospital waiting room. I wish I'd been chatting with a live agent right off the bat, as I did when trying out Talkspace.

Price Per Session: $109–$129 (therapists) or $279 (psychiatrists)

Takes Insurance? Yes, some.

See Also: Cerebral, Teladoc

DR. PHIL'S SIDE HUSTLE

DOCTOR ON DEMAND

Test Driver: Eric Sullivan

How It Works: TV's third-favorite doctor invested in this early entrant in the telehealth wars. It's the Lexus of its class: built well, runs smooth, but not exactly a lively experience.

What I Liked: Like Amwell (but not BetterHelp), DoD is verified by URAC, a third-party accreditor—an assurance that the platform follows best practices. The company is bullish on longevity. In 2021, it merged with two others; the estimated valuation of the telehealth giant, not public as of press time, is in the billions.

What I'd Change: My therapist, a kind man from North Carolina, knew I was shopping around, which lent the session the vibe of a speed-dating round. At times, it felt like he was falling back on canned lines. *I bet he says that to all his clients . . .*

Price Per Session: $179 for fifty minutes with a psychologist

Takes Insurance? Yes, some.

See Also: Amwell, Teladoc

10 Still Feels Too Intimate? Try an App . . .

MORE THAN TEN THOUSAND wellness apps exist already, according to Harvard researchers, and more pop up each day. There are apps that offer teletherapy, like BetterHelp and Talkspace (see left); peer support, like WeAreMore; guided meditation, like Headspace and Calm; mood tracking, like MoodKit; and . . . you get it. The FDA takes a mostly hands-off approach toward the market, which makes the search for one feel a little like buying dietary supplements.

So manage your expectations about what self-help apps can and cannot do. "Even the companies would deny that their products are as effective as medication or therapy," says **John Torous, head of the division of digital psychiatry at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center,** a Harvard-affiliated teaching hospital. Apps "should only be used in conjunction with, not instead of, a treating clinician," he says. He'd know; Torous also heads the American Psychiatric Association's work on smartphone apps.

But they can be a start. Torous and his team maintain MIND (the Mobile Health Index & Navigation Database), a searchable database of the approximately 650 apps they've deemed most relevant. Don't expect to find lists of recommendations; this isn't the app equivalent of the *Michelin Guide*. It's a resource to sort through the options using criteria tailored to all sorts of needs.

And whatever you do, don't choose your self-care apps by their popularity. Torous says there's strong evidence that the star ratings "are not useful and do not correlate with quality or utility."

11 . . . But Not a Bot

WE'RE NOT HERE to caution you against therapeutic chatbots like Woebot, the shiny new things in the wellness-app industry. If you want to text with an AI "therapist" all day long, go for it. (We hear that twenty-four-hour access is part of the appeal.) But too little is known about whether they work. We'll hold off for when there's convincing evidence of their effectiveness. Until then, we'll stick to human-to-human therapy, screen mediated or IRL.

PAGE 105: GETTY IMAGES (INKBLOT). THIS PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (LAPTOP). ALAMY (WILLIAMS).

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INVOLVE *your* BETTER HALF

BY ANONYMOUS, *an Esquire staffer who's in couples therapy*

HAVING GONE TO a lot of weddings, and having been in one myself, I've noticed a theme in the words that precede the kissing part: This shit is hard. At the time, you don't think that could ever be the case, but two decades into a relationship, I can say with certainty that it's the truth. There's no manual they give you (unless I missed my copy) about codependency, communication issues, emotional labor, stating wants and needs in a healthy manner, recognizing and dealing with your triggers in an adult way, and a multitude of other issues that inevitably come up in a long-term partnership.

These are all things I've learned—or rather all things I've found the words to vocalize for the first time in my life—in couples therapy, which my partner and I began at the start of the pandemic because, well, we didn't need Nostradamus to explain that things were going to get hairy for everyone. It was important to us that we found someone who understood our worldview and vibed with our values. Culturally competent, in other words.

Just because you go to couples therapy doesn't mean your relationship is on the brink. Cliché sports analogy alert: Is a team better with a coach or without? You know the answer. Our therapist helped me untangle issues about myself and my relationship in ways that felt—feel—manageable. Normal, even. The type of stuff most folks deal with.

Know that there will be some weeks when things feel much better, and other weeks, not so much. It isn't about a third party declaring that you are wrong and your partner is right. It's about committing to moving forward in better ways, together. And then retiring the coach.

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Heed the Signs of POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION in MEN

DON'T MISTAKE IT for the same hormone-induced condition that as many as one in seven new mothers experience during and after pregnancy—the perinatal phase, if we're being scientific about it. There's no "For the Dudes" subsection of the entry for perinatal depression in the *DSM-5*, the gold standard in the U.S. for classifying mental disorders. Still, some of the symptoms—losses of interest and energy, gloomy mood, fluctuations in sleep or eating patterns, reduced ability to concentrate, and recurrent suicidal ideation—do afflict up to 10 percent of guys in the first year of their newborn's life. "Men are less likely to report traditional symptoms of depression, such as sadness and crying, because of the cultural norms of masculinity," says **Sheehan Fisher, an assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral services at Northwestern University,** but we're "at risk of developing 'masculine depression,' which involves avoidant or numbing behaviors to cope with emotional distress, including substance use, hypersexuality, and aggression." Great!

This isn't your excuse to stay in bed while your partner changes the diaper. Chances are that if you're an emotional wreck, so are they—one of the strongest predictors of the condition is having a partner who's experiencing the same. The risks of ignoring the problem are borne mostly by the last person you'd want to hurt: your baby. "There is strong evidence that a father's mental health has a direct impact on the mental health of the mother and the child," Fisher says. "Even if a mother is healthy or has recovered from postpartum depression, the child's health is still at risk if the father is not well." Vigilance is what's required; research suggests that early detection of the symptoms of perinatal depression in both women and men is key to effective treatment.

GETTY IMAGES (RINGS, BABY)

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4

Remember That Your Therapist Is a Person, Too

THERAPISTS MAY BE TRAINED to help us with our emotional problems, but they have just as many themselves—and that's at the best of times. The pandemic has stretched the community to its limit. In a recent American Psychological Association survey of psychologists:

43 *percent said they were seeing more patients than before*

7 out of **10** *psychologists with a waiting list said it had grown since the pandemic's start*

46 *percent reported feeling burned out*

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KNOW WHEN—*AND HOW*—to Break Up with YOUR THERAPIST

BY AVI KLEIN, *clinical director of Downtown Somatic Therapy in New York City*

FIRST, A REQUEST: Please don't let one mediocre experience turn you off to the whole enterprise. Therapy is about cultivating a better relationship with yourself; we're just here to offer some professional guidance along the way. And I'm pretty sure you can't break up with yourself.

But you might find that therapy is not—or is no longer—bringing out the best version of you. That may be on your therapist! They're too pragmatic or not pragmatic enough; they focus too much on the solutions or too much on the problem's root cause. Or it could be on you. If your sessions have become repetitive, even stale—to use another common criticism—it's possible your therapist is phoning it in. But it also could be you're not being vulnerable enough or not putting in the work between sessions.

In any case, if you've hit that particular wall, it's time for you and your therapist to part ways. Almost. I encourage you not to send a breakup note. (Unless you're only a couple weeks in and already know it'll never work, in which case: It's totally fine to send that note! Just don't ghost us.) Instead, share your thoughts at the next session and see how your therapist responds. You could simply say, "I've been feeling frustrated with therapy lately, and I'm hoping we can talk about it." Any good therapist should be able to handle that question with skill and grace. If they don't, you have your answer. If they do, you might be surprised by how they're able to translate your frustration into a renewed focus on the issues that matter to you most.

And if you'd rather avoid the conversation for fear of upsetting your therapist, hey, you can always talk about conflict avoidance with the next one.

death of *a* lobsterman

On a remote island in Maine, a group of friends thought they witnessed one man killing another with an ax. But no one was ever arrested. In a small town far out at sea, justice sometimes works a little differently.

BY JESSE ELLISON PHOTOGRAPHS BY GREGORY HALPERN

Above: The house on Vinalhaven where Roger Feltis was killed, in June 2020. Left: In the waters off the island, pirate flags are not uncommon.

HEIDI GUILFORD RODE SHOTGUN IN HER BOYFRIEND'S white Dodge Charger. Her stepsister and a couple friends sat in the back, with the windows rolled down for the smokers. It was a cool night in June—sweatshirt weather—an unremarkable Sunday on an island off the coast of Maine. They could have been in any small town, just about anyplace. A loud engine, blaring music, laughing shouts from the front seat to the back. And all around them:

Quiet.

Heidi knew every inch of these roads. They all did. They'd grown up on this island, Vinalhaven, fifteen miles out to sea by ferry, a rock in the ocean that the glaciers hadn't quite smoothed over. Seven miles by five, population 1,200, give or take, and triple that when the summer people showed up.

They took a left off Heidi's road out by State Beach and swung through town, cruising slowly through the downtown stretch, past the bar and the grocery store and the bank, then out to Old Harbor Road and over to the Basin. Most years by mid-June, there are enough tourists in town that you wouldn't recognize everyone, but 2020 was different. This June felt more like the wintertime, when you can pretty much tell who's driving every car on the road, often just by the headlights.

They were headed back toward Heidi's place when they saw a Chevy Equinox they knew belonged to Jennie Candage racing past them. But Jennie would never drive that fast, so they figured it had to be her boyfriend, Roger Feltis. Roger was a local lobsterman, fairly new to the island, twenty-eight years old and husky—big enough that he could seem intimidating, but with a sweet, goofy smile.

They started to follow him, but he sped out of sight, so they looped back down through town and out toward the high school. That's when Roger appeared in their rearview mirror, then pulled up alongside and told them to meet him in the school parking lot.

It was just around 9:30 P.M. Roger—wearing a T-shirt, a pair of Jennie's old basketball shorts, and Crocs on a night when the temperature was cooler than usual, in the low fifties—got out of his car and came over to talk to his friend Isles Blackington, Heidi's boyfriend, through the driver's-side window. He seemed upset, bordering on frantic, going on about Dorian and Briannah Ames, a married couple who lived down on Roberts Cemetery Road, about a half mile out of town. He said Dorian had cut his brake lines and taken a hatchet to Jennie's taillight. He said the Ameses had been harassing him, that he was sick of it, and that nothing was being done about it.

Roger said he was on his way over to their house.

Everyone knew the Ameses. Not nine months earlier Dorian had been arrested for allegedly firing a gun near the gas tank of a truck a woman was sitting in, the second time he was charged with criminal threatening with a dangerous weapon, a felony. (In both cases, the felony charges were dismissed and he pleaded guilty to lesser charges.) Because of a 2015 conviction for domestic violence terrorizing, he wasn't allowed to possess a firearm. Still, Heidi says she wasn't scared. None of them were. All in their twenties, they'd seen plenty of fistfights—Vinalhaven is kind of a throwback that way. Worst case, they thought, someone might have to jump out of the car to break it up.

It all happened so fast. Less than twenty minutes after leaving the parking lot, Roger was bleeding to death in the back seat of Isles's car outside the island's medical center. The group of friends, stunned, believed they had just witnessed a homicide—one lobsterman killing another with an ax in a bloody brawl.

But did they? A man died—was killed, in what the state itself said was a homicide—and yet to this day, no one has been charged with a single crime related to his death. Not that there wasn't an investigation. More law-enforcement officials than anyone had ever seen on the island descended on Vinalhaven the night Roger died. But they didn't arrive until around 2:00 A.M.—that's what happens when you live fifteen miles out in the ocean. No, the investigation into the violent and untimely death of Roger Feltis began in the parking lot outside the medical center, conducted by the island's sole police officer, an amiable, forty-eight-year-old Knox County sheriff's deputy named Dan Landers.

People called him Deputy Dan.

TO GET TO VINALHAVEN, YOU CATCH THE MAINE STATE FERRY out of Rockland—the historic, mid-coast county seat—and arrive an hour and fifteen minutes later at a bustling port. On clear days, you can see back to the mainland, but if there's fog—and there's often fog—it can feel like a world unto itself, drifting out there in the Atlantic. It's a place that's on the way to nowhere. But even if you've never set foot on Vinalhaven, chances are good that you've seen its granite. You may have even stood on it.

The island is famous for its pink-gray rock, which for decades was carved out of quarries in massive chunks, loaded onto ships, and sent all over the country. Vinalhaven granite is in the Washington Monument and the base of the Brooklyn Bridge. It forms the entirety of the massive stone pillars surrounding the altar within Manhattan's Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

Today, many of those quarries are swimming holes.

On the north side—on the land hugging the Fox Island Thoroughfare, the channel separating Vinalhaven from its sister island, North Haven—you'll find sprawling estates with private docks and tennis courts, listed for upwards of $4 million. On the south side is the village, tucked in around Carver's Harbor, one of the busiest lobstering harbors in the state, full of fishing boats with names like *Batshit Crazy*, *She's All Wet*, and *Shit Poke*.

More people live on Vinalhaven year-round than on any of Maine's other unbridged islands, but it's small enough that when you call the pizza place in the off-season, they probably know what you want. All the roads either dead-end or circle back to where they started.

It can feel a bit lawless out on Vinalhaven, like some sort of eastern frontier. The strength of its fishing industry means it doesn't depend on tourists or summer people as heavily as other parts of the Maine coast do. Pirate flags wave in the harbor, and locals tell stories of "island justice," like the one about an accused rapist who was beaten and left below the high-tide line. (He survived.)

Vinalhaven made national news when, at the beginning of the pandemic, "local vigilantes" cut down a tree to prevent some New Jersey people from leaving their property. "We're all out on this rock together," Heidi says. "A lot of people out here don't want to call the police. You have a problem with someone, you go to their house. You're going to see them tomorrow at the grocery store anyway."

The population is sparse, but Vinalhaven has the second-highest number of arrests per capita in Knox County, which contains several other inhabited islands and part of the mainland. The community has long had an uneasy relationship with law enforcement—with outside interference of any kind, really. The town (Vinalhaven is the name of both the island and its only town) pays the county around $125,000 a year for a deputy, plus rent and expenses.

At the time of Roger's death, Landers was that sole cop.

He seemed to have made an already tough job harder for himself. For one thing, he lived on North Haven, the tonier island across the thoroughfare. There was also the fact that some people thought he policed the way his predecessors had—pulling over little old ladies while ignoring real troublemakers. In conversations with around a dozen islanders about Landers, the adjective that came up the most often was *useless*.

"Dan wanted to be friends with everyone; that was his problem," Jennie's mom, Karen Doughty, tells me. Landers had also lost some credibility earlier in 2020 when, during a late-winter storm, after his skiff had accidentally floated off the dock, he jumped into forty-degree water in an attempt to save it, requiring several people to rescue him and catching a mild case of hypothermia.

IN A FARAWAY PLACE, clockwise from bottom left: Jennie Candage was living with her boyfriend, Roger Feltis, when he died; a tall ship etched into local stone; Jennie's stepfather (and Roger Feltis's boss), Kyle Doughty; a news report of Roger's death; Jennie's mother, Karen Doughty; downtown Vinalhaven, Maine.

"Like a true landlubber," says Kyle Doughty, who is Jennie's stepfather and was Roger's boss. "All he showed was piss-poor judgment every time anything happened out here."

THE TROUBLE BETWEEN ROGER FELTIS AND THE AMESES STARTED long before Roger's death. Previous highlights included a series of Facebook posts by Briannah shortly after Roger moved to the island in the fall of 2019, calling him a pedophile using prison slang ("skinner").

There are multiple hypotheses about the source of the enmity. One involved the fact that Roger had a daughter with a cousin of Briannah's, and raising her as a separated couple wasn't always easy. Jennie had known Dorian and Briannah a little bit, in the way that everyone knows everyone out there, especially if you're the same age. For a time, Dorian had been giving tattoos out of his house on Roberts Cemetery Road, and Jennie had gotten one from him—a little lilac bush on her upper arm that she's since had covered up. In any case, her theory was simple jealousy: Roger had battled addiction to painkillers stemming from a car accident, and she believed the Ameses were envious that he was getting his life together.

Then there was the story about the lobster boat. It was rumored that before Roger moved to the island, he and Dorian had once been up for the same job as a sternman on one of the more lucrative lobster boats, and Roger had gotten it. Getting into the lobstering industry isn't just a matter of dropping some traps in the water and then hauling up a bunch of bugs (as lobsters are known locally). It's a job more often inherited than chosen outright, and even then, Mainers wait years, sometimes decades, for commercial licenses. There are strict rules about the number of traps you can set. Lobstermen have territories, and setting your traps on another's turf can lead to violent retaliation.

The sternman is the second guy on the boat, charged with baiting (using dead herring, primarily) and emptying the traps. It's a messy, smelly job, and it's hard—days usually start before dawn. But there's a kind of freedom in the work. In a region without many high-paying jobs, you could do a lot worse. Typically sternmen are paid a percentage of the boat's profits, so the difference between working on a good boat and a bad boat can be huge.

But even in an industry known for being cutthroat, a previous conflict over

"A group of individuals nearby said, 'They killed him!'…I replied, 'Killed who?' Briannah

a sternman job isn't an entirely satisfying explanation given what ultimately happened—Roger bleeding to death from a wound that was three and a half inches deep and revealed parts of his shoulder bone.

Roger told Jennie he believed the Ameses were filing false complaints about him for everything from illegal clam-digging to selling drugs. (Landers denies the Ameses made such complaints; the Marine Patrol says it has no record, either.) According to Jennie and her family, Roger approached Landers about the Ameses multiple times in the months before his death, complaining of harassment and asking him to intervene, but nothing came of it.

At Kyle Doughty's urging, a few days before Roger died he again went to Landers and attempted to file a formal report. Doughty texted Roger the next morning to ask how it went.

"What dan say about those cunts?" Doughty wrote.

"Never met with me said he was busy so hopefully gonna hunt him down today," Roger wrote back. A few hours later, Roger texted Doughty to tell him the brake lines failed on his truck and he'd had to drive into a ditch to avoid hitting another vehicle. He thought someone had cut the lines.

"Wellsa wtf," Doughty responded, using a Maine expression for "well, sir." "Unreal man."

Roger wrote back: "This shits gotta end today before someone gets hurt."

Landers, for his part, says Roger did come to him about Briannah's "skinner" Facebook posts, and about the brake lines, but that there was nothing he could do. "I can't swab for DNA on your brake lines," he says he told Roger. "This isn't *CSI: Miami*."

FOUR DAYS LATER, ON SUNDAY, JUNE 14, ROGER AND JENNIE WENT to the Sand Bar, a homey, white-clapboard-and-neon place with a ship's wheel hanging outside and a pool table and a mudslide machine inside; everyone just calls it "the bar." Roger and Jennie lived in an apartment upstairs.

One of Roger's friends was there, and he started needling Roger about how the Ameses were crapping all over him. Jennie could sense Roger trying to keep his cool, not saying much at first, sipping his beer, smiling it off. But as the night went on, he kept winding up, and now she could see: Roger was pissed.

Around 7:00, Jennie got up to use the bathroom. When she came back, Roger was gone.

A few minutes later, he blew back in the door of the Sand Bar and said he'd been at the Ameses. He'd kicked down their door, he said. No one was home.

They had a couple more drinks. Sometime before 9:00, Jennie carried their takeout containers upstairs to the apartment, annoyed. She had wanted to eat dinner in bed watching television with Roger. But he took off in a car with his friend to pick up another, then came back and said he was taking Jennie's car to pay a second visit to the Ameses'. She yelled at him—she *begged* him—not to go.

He peeled off into the cool night.

ROGER PULLED INTO THE DRIVEWAY OF THE AMESES' PLACE, A rental with a big front deck out on Roberts Cemetery Road, across from a gravel

THE SCENE, left: Shown outside the house where the Ameses lived, witnesses to whatever happened that night included, from left, Hayley Bryant, Hannah Jo Moody, Ruby Hopkins, Heidi Guilford, and Isles Blackington. Right: Roger Feltis in an undated photo.

responded, 'I didn't kill him!'" —**VINALHAVEN POLICE REPORT**

pit. He got out and started shouting about his brake lines. Dorian grabbed a small ax, stomped across the yard, and smashed a taillight on Jennie's car.

Roger got back in the car and tore off, racing around until Heidi and her friends spotted him. Jennie had gone looking for a friend who she hoped might calm Roger down, and she arrived in the school parking lot right after the rest of them. "Roger began screaming at me to bring him to Briannah and Dorian's house, to which I replied I wasn't, but he insisted, saying if I didn't bring him he would go no matter," Jennie wrote in a statement submitted to Maine State Police later that summer. "So I brought him down." Heidi and her friends followed behind.

Briannah called Dan Landers via Facebook at 9:37. At 9:38, she messaged him: "WHERE THE FUCK ARE U when I need you dude."

One minute later: "DANNN THESE PEOPLE ARE HERE"

And then:

"HELLLOOOO"

"U SAID NOT TO LET DORIAN GET IN TROUBLE"

"BUT UR NOT ANSWERING"

Landers says he didn't receive these notes, sent via Facebook Messenger, until much later.

All six witnesses to what happened next—Roger's girlfriend, Jennie Candage, twenty-seven; Heidi Guilford, twenty-three; Heidi's boyfriend, Isles Blackington, twenty-one; their friends Hannah Jo Moody, twenty-one, and Hayley Bryant, twenty-two; and Heidi's stepsister, Ruby Hopkins, twenty-three—say they saw virtually the same thing: "I saw Roger get out of Jennie's car and walk to Dorian's front door." "I saw Dorian come out of the house with an ax in his hand. Roger backed up and held his hands in the air and said, 'Put the ax down and fight me like a man.' " "That's when Briannah said, 'Oh, you wanna fight like a man,' and punched Roger in the face." "Roger put his hands up to defend himself, and Dorian said, 'I'm gonna kill you, Roger. I'm gonna fuckin' kill you.' " "Briannah then pushed Roger against the house. She screamed, 'Hit that bitch, Dorian, hit that bitch.' That is when I saw Dorian swing the ax." "Dorian reached around Briannah while swinging the ax in Roger's direction." "Dorian waited for the perfect opportunity to hit him with the ax." "I could see Dorian swing the ax, and then Roger started walking down the porch steps." "Roger stumbled down the porch stairs and headed towards Isles's car." "As Roger approached the vehicle, I could tell right away that something was not quite right. I could see a dark line running down between Roger's neck and shoulder. I noticed the line start to spread as he got closer to the vehicle."

Hayley, Ruby, and Hannah jumped out of the car to make room for Roger, who collapsed in the back seat of the Charger.

"The next thing I remember was being in the car on top of Roger, reaching into his neck and grabbing his artery so I could stop the bleeding," Jennie's statement reads.

Through Dorian's court-appointed attorney, Dorian and Briannah declined to be interviewed for this story.

THE ISLANDS COMMUNITY MEDICAL SERVICES BUILDING IS A SMALL, one-story brick structure, 1970s vintage. Landers pulled up in his police cruiser and found a large group, including Jennie, Isles, and Heidi, in one part of the parking lot and Briannah perched on the bumper of an ambulance some thirty feet away.

Landers approached Briannah, whose hand was being tended to by an EMT. "She was awake, alert, and spoke to me in a coherent manner, although she was clearly emotionally distraught," Landers wrote.

His report of the incident contained a number of errors—beginning with the date, which he listed as June 15. He called Jennie "Jeannie" throughout. "[Briannah] excitedly uttered that Roger Feltis had come to her house and that they fought and he (FELTIS) had stabbed her," he wrote. "A group of individuals nearby said, 'They killed him!' To which I replied, 'Killed who?!' Briannah responded to that, 'I didn't kill him!' Jeannie [*sic*] Candage (ROGER FELTIS's girlfriend) was crying, 'They killed him!' "

Landers identified Jennie's Chevy Equinox as a RAV4 and Isles's Dodge Charger as a Ford Mustang—though he did note, correctly, that it was "covered inside and out with blood."

"I made contact with ISLES BLACKINGTON who was standing nearby and asked why ROGER was in his car," Landers wrote. "ISLES said, 'Because he was bleeding fucking to death dude.' I asked ISLES who had injured ROGER. ISLES immediately said, 'DORIAN.' "

Roughly an hour and a half after they had arrived at the medical center, Marc Candage, Jennie's father and the island's fire chief, who had been among the first to respond that night, told his daughter that her boyfriend was dead.

Back on the mainland, a swarm of Knox County sheriff's deputies and detectives from the state-police major-crimes unit were preparing to board a Marine Patrol boat, most wearing suits. They would arrive around 2:00 A.M. Landers said later that he was impressed not only by their formalwear but by the fact that they were wearing cologne.

DORIAN AMES, after he was arrested for disorderly conduct for his response to the angry protests that greeted his return to Vinalhaven. The charge was eventually dropped.

COURTESY KNOX COUNTY JAIL

Angry locals pulled up to yell at Vinalhaven's only cop, flip him off, and piss on

KAREN AND KYLE DOUGHTY, JENNIE'S MOM AND STEPFATHER, live in a tidy white farmhouse on East Main Street. Jennie, who was given Valium at the medical center to calm her nerves, spent the night at their house instead of returning to the apartment above the bar. She slept on the couch in her mother's living room. Her sister, Bethany, and a friend slept next to her on an air mattress on the floor.

The next morning, Doughty had to go out on his boat—he had more than $600 in bait he needed to get in his lobster traps. Marc Candage, his wife (Jennie's stepmother), and the girls were there at the house with Karen. They were sitting in the living room, chatting. Karen was facing the glass front door, which looks out onto the street.

She recognized the dogs first: Dorian's dogs. At first she couldn't believe what she was seeing, but there, at the edge of her yard, was Dorian Ames. Walking his dogs down the sidewalk, as normal as could be, right in front of the house, nearly half a mile from where he lived. She had never seen him here before. She'd never seen him walking his dogs anywhere, for that matter.

She tried to get Candage's attention without the girls realizing what was happening. Jennie was groggy from the Valium, and Karen worried that Bethany might go flying out of the house to confront him. Nobody had gotten much sleep. She pulled Candage outside and told him who'd just passed by.

Are you sure? Candage asked.

I'm positive, Karen said.

Dorian turned around and walked back past the house, slower this time. Candage and his wife ran over to the public-safety building to demand answers: Why on earth wasn't this guy in custody?

Eight Days Later

KAREN GOT A CALL AT 2:05 THE FOLLOWING TUESDAY. THE STATE police had just given a friend a heads-up: Dorian Ames was on the one-o'clock ferry. The ferry schedule practically keeps the time on the island; everybody knows that the one-o'clock gets in at 2:15.

Dorian would be on Vinalhaven in ten minutes.

A small town can be a funny place. Like a bubble world, where a local event or rumor or issue or referendum bounces around, louder and louder, finally echoing so loud that you can't not hear it, until it becomes the only thing in the world that matters, because this is your town, and your town has an equilibrium, and equilibriums are fragile. And you want to protect it.

And when that small town is on a rock fifteen miles out to sea?

Word of Dorian's arrival spread quickly, and people began gathering at the ferry terminal and at the house on Roberts Cemetery Road. "About a hundred Vinalhaven men walked up around the corner and just stood," Kyle Doughty says, though news reports from the day pegged the number of people outside the Ameses' house at closer to thirty. "Everybody just standing there, keeping an eye. We're gonna go everywhere that he goes."

Dorian had disappeared from the island after Roger's death—no one seemed to know for sure when, or where he went. Even back on the mainland, where Vinalhaven sometimes feels like some distant place—beautiful to visit, but somewhere you're not entirely sure you're welcome—people were talking about "the ax murder" and the suspect who had been spotted walking his dogs the morning after.

Dorian went to the house to collect some belongings and reappeared a little over an hour later—this time being led by police back to the ferry terminal, where the crowd had grown. He had flipped off the protesters at his house and spat at them from his car, so the police arrested him, ostensibly for disorderly conduct. But the state eventually dropped that charge, and Landers says they, in effect, arrested him largely for his own protection. "They were gonna, like, *lynch* him," he says. "It was right out of an Alfred Hitchcock movie or something. The natives are restless. That's legit what it felt like."

One person livestreamed the scene, a video that's still on Facebook in a private group dedicated to Roger's memory. In it, a couple dozen people are milling around the ferry parking lot. A handful of sheriff's deputies and Marine Patrol are there.

Dorian appears in the frame, wearing a black hooded sweatshirt and dark shorts. He walks quickly, with his hood up and his head down, surrounded by officers. His hands are free.

People in the crowd start shouting: "Murderer!" "Fucking pussy!" "Cocksucking chicken shit!" "Where the fuck are his cuffs?" The officers take him swiftly past the crowds and down to a long dock toward a Marine Patrol boat.

And then you can hear a voice, a man we can't see, say, his voice steady but spiked with angry incredulity: "My tax money's paying for you guys to protect him? Seriously? I beat up a pedophile, I get threatened to go in jail for a month. He fucking murders someone, you guys give him a ride to the fucking mainland? This is why the fucking police are useless. This is why we don't call you out here, because you are fucking useless. We call you, you come out, nothing fucking happens. That is why vigilantes and Vinalhaven island justice is the way we do shit. He'll get his. He'll fucking get his. Don't worry. You can't protect him forever."

Someone lets out a piercing scream: "JUSTICE FOR ROGER!" The entire crowd starts chanting it in unison, over and over, as the Marine Patrol pulls off the dock.

FOR A FEW WEEKS, VINALHAVEN SAT TIGHT, EVERYONE WAITING for the arrest they were sure would come. The cops and investigators had left. Heidi and her friends who were there that night were interviewed but were surprised they'd never been asked to give formal written statements. (It was only later that summer that they wrote and sent them to Maine State Police.) The Knox County district attorney's office had assured Jennie and her family that they were going to bring the case before a grand jury, that it was just a matter of "dotting our *i*'s and crossing our *t*'s." Karen remembers them saying that over and over.

Less than a month had passed since Roger's death. Jennie was given a date when she would testify in front of the grand jury; a person from the DA's office asked her and her family not to tell anyone about it because nobody wanted a scene at the courthouse like the crazy one that had unfolded at the ferry terminal out on Vinalhaven—it might influence the grand jury.

At the courthouse, an imposing brick building dating to the 1870s, Jennie's testimony took about twenty minutes. She knew of only one other witness, the investigating officer from the major-crimes unit. She and her family went to eat lunch, then were called back and informed that the grand jury had come back with a decision: "No bill."

Roger's mother dropped her face into her hands and let out a cry. The others gasped and stared at the prosecutor on the other side of the room.

No bill?

No bill, they were told, meant that neither Dorian nor Briannah would face any charges in the death of Roger Feltis. The state maintained that Roger hadn't been killed with an ax but rather that the wounds on his shoulders and back—one of which was nine and a half inches long, an inch and a half wide, and an inch deep, revealing parts of bone—had been caused by a fillet knife, which Briannah had used in self-defense, they said.

The state doesn't keep track of how many grand juries come back "no bill," but Dorian's court-appointed attorney, Jeremy Pratt, later told the *Bangor Daily News* that he's represented a thousand clients and this was the first time he'd seen this: "I always assumed the grand jury was a rubber stamp of the state, so it was great to see a grand jury make a deliberate, independent decision."

"NO ONE WAS SUPPOSED TO DIE," BRIANNAH SAYS. "NOBODY WANTED to see him dead. . . . In that type of situation, when someone is trying to kill you, you have to defend yourself."

She's wearing a Red Sox jersey, and her right hand and forearm are covered in bandages. The camera is angled down at her face while she speaks; she sounds frustrated, defiant, at times even a little rueful. She talks to the camera, occasionally stopping to read and respond to the comments coming in over Facebook Live. She does her makeup throughout.

Dorian paces the dim room behind her, sometimes leaning over his wife's shoulder to speak to the camera. He smokes a cigarette and sips something from a can. You can't make out much else in the low, gritty light. The theme song for *Unsolved Mysteries,* at one point, plays faintly.

"We've been nothing but attacked the whole entire time, and we didn't

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

1. Publication title: Esquire.
2. Publication number: 0561-9100.
3. Filing date: October 1, 2021.
4. Issue frequency: Bi-monthly.
5. Number of issues published annually: 6.
6. Annual subscription price: $7.97.
7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019.
8. Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business office of publisher: 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019.
9. Full names and complete mailing addresses of publisher, editor, and managing editor. Publisher: Jack Essig, 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019. Editor: Michael Sebastian, 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019. Managing editor: John Kenney, 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019.
10. Owner: Hearst Magazine Media, Inc., registered office: 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019. Stockholders of Hearst Communications, Inc., are: Hearst Magazine Media, Inc., registered office: 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019.
11. None.
12. Not applicable.
13. Publication title: Esquire.
14. Issue date for circulation data below: September 2021.
15. Extent and nature of circulation:

	Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months	
A.	Total number of copies:	510,426
B.	Paid circulation (by mail and outside the mail)	
	1. Mailed outside-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541:	417,732
	2. Mailed in-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541:	not applicable
	3. Paid distribution outside the mails including sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other paid distribution outside USPS:	8,725
	4. Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS:	not applicable
C.	Total paid distribution:	426,457
D.	Free or nominal rate distribution (by mail and outside the mail)	
	1. Free or nominal rate outside-county copies included on PS Form 3541:	59,676
	2. Free or nominal rate in-county copies included on PS Form 3541:	not applicable
	3. Free or nominal rate copies mailed at other classes through the USPS:	not applicable
	4. Free or nominal rate distribution outside the mail:	5,873
E.	Total free or nominal rate distribution:	65,549
F.	Total distribution:	492,006
G.	Copies not distributed:	18,420
H.	Total:	510,426
I.	Percent paid:	86.68%
16.	A. Requested and paid electronic copies:	57,564
	B. Total requested and paid print copies and requested/paid electronic copies:	484,021
	C. Total requested copy distribution and requested/paid electronic copies:	549,570
	D. Percent paid and/or requested circulation (both print and electronic copies):	88.07%

	No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date	
A.	Total number of copies:	587,400
B.	Paid circulation (by mail and outside the mail)	
	1. Mailed outside-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541:	453,463
	2. Mailed in-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541:	not applicable
	3. Paid distribution outside the mails including sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other paid distribution outside USPS:	10,300
	4. Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS:	not applicable
C.	Total paid distribution:	453,463
D.	Free or nominal rate distribution	
	1. Free or nominal rate outside-county copies included on PS Form 3541:	100,429
	2. Free or nominal rate in-county copies included on PS Form 3541:	not applicable
	3. Free or nominal rate copies mailed at other classes through the USPS:	not applicable
	4. Free or nominal rate distribution outside the mail:	1,718
E.	Total free or nominal rate distribution:	102,147
F.	Total distribution:	555,610
G.	Copies not distributed:	31,789
H.	Total:	587,399
I.	Percent paid:	81.62%
16.	A. Requested and paid electronic copies:	54,000
	B. Total requested and paid print copies and requested/paid electronic copies:	507,463
	C. Total requested copy distribution and requested/paid electronic copies:	609,610
	D. Percent paid and/or requested circulation (both print and electronic copies):	83.24%

17. Publication of statement of ownership: If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the Winter 2021–22 issue of this publication.
18. Signature and title of editor, publisher, business manager, or owner: Jack Essig, Publisher

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DEATH OF A LOBSTERMAN

commit one crime," Dorian says. "Not even one."

The video, which they filmed on the night of July 8, 2020, the same day the grand jury came back "no bill," goes on for twenty minutes.

Briannah tells the camera she was in the shower when Roger arrived back at their house, kicked down the door, dragged her out, and cut her fingers "near off." Later she says she texted Landers from inside the shower. "And everyone's saying [Roger] didn't come with a weapon?" she says, holding up her bandaged hand for the camera. "The cops didn't want to go into detail and tell people what really fucking happened, so I'm going to. Because that's fucking bullshit. It's pretty bad I have to defend myself because the cops and everybody are so fucking scared of the Vinalhaven community. . . . I reached out to the police for help. I tried to get them there. They didn't show up. That's on them."

"That's a fucking lawsuit right there," Dorian says. "I had everything lined up. I had a good fucking job. I was buying a fucking house. Taking care of and providing for my fucking family. Living the American fucking dream. And *boom*. Roger Feltis fucked it up in one fucking day."

Investigators found no evidence that Roger was armed when he went to their house the third time, but Briannah and Dorian say he stabbed her and that she reached for the fillet knife only after she realized her hand was bleeding. "He had a chance to leave after [he stabbed her] the first time, and he didn't," Dorian says, as Briannah brushes eye shadow onto her eyelids. He says Briannah grabbed the new Dexter Russell fillet knife "that had never even cut a fish" out of the kitchen sink strainer and stabbed Roger in self-defense.

"I weren't fucking dying that night," Briannah says as she ends the livestream. "And I ain't gonna be anytime soon, either, so you're all going to have to get the fuck over it. Really fucking quick. Because we didn't do nothing wrong. Bottom fucking line. And now I'm gonna hop off here. Because I've said what I had to say. And I hope you all have a wonderful night. Bye, y'all."

BY THE SECOND WEEK OF JULY, IT SEEMED as if every other vehicle on Vinalhaven had #JUSTICEFORROGER written across its rear window.

One afternoon, Landers was parked in the lot overlooking Carver's Harbor in his Knox County Sheriff vehicle. For hours, cars and trucks pulled in to yell at him, flip him off, piss on the pavement, and do burnouts—squealing their tires into smoky, noxious clouds—on their way out. The whole situation felt, as one longtime resident described it, "like a tinderbox."

A couple weeks later, during a vote to approve the town budget, Vinalhaven residents voted against re-upping the annual contract with the sheriff—the first time anyone could remember this happening. They were, in effect, electing to have no police presence on the island, the only item on a forty-eight-item town ballot not to be approved.

Landers was gone from the island within weeks.

One Year Later

ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE SAND BAR—where Roger had lived upstairs—a small whiteboard sign was propped against a lobster trap. Someone had written, YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN ROGER!! and drawn two lobsters.

Around town, Vinalhaven seemed otherwise much the same as it always has. A new deputy arrived last winter, after long negotiations between the select board and the sheriff's office. He patrols the island forty hours a week, driving the same downtown roads over and over, just like his predecessor.

For some, though, things just feel different—the kind of different that you can't go back from.

The house the Ameses were renting on Roberts Cemetery Road had sold for $130,000. A year to the day after the killing, a neighbor, Devin Walker, was fixing lobster traps with his sternman in a big workshop behind his house. On one wall hung a Confederate flag; on another, a Tupac Shakur poster.

Walker was asleep during the fight itself but woke up sometime later and saw someone smashing the windows of Jennie's car. He said the only time he'd been interviewed by the police was at 2:00 in the morning on the night that it happened. "For five minutes, and that was it," he says.

He had recently been visited by an attorney for the Feltis family, who was gathering information for a lawsuit against Maine's attorney general. "I think the state has a lot of explaining to do before attorneys like that come out of nowhere and want to figure out what's going on in the state of Maine," Walker says. "I don't blame them for wanting to come check it out. A lot of people would like to know."

Lisa Marchese, who runs the state attorney general's criminal division, declined to comment on the grand jury proceedings, or on the state's investigative file. "What I can tell you—and what I'd be happy to tell you—is that there are some self-defense cases we don't even bring to the grand jury," she says. "That we just make the decision that this person acted in self-defense. And some people have criticized us for bringing this to the grand jury, because to them it was such a clear self-defense case."

DAN LANDERS LIVES IN A FOURTEENTH-FLOOR apartment with a view of the Washington Monument. He moved to the D. C. area shortly after leaving Vinalhaven—he's on military leave from the sheriff's office, working at the National Guard's Joint Operations Center, advising generals, one of whom is on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He had been in the Army National Guard for more than thirty years and volunteered for this work. He likes his new gig. The money is good, and it feels like being at "the center of the universe." In January, he was

on a teleconference call with President Biden.

"If I could kick fifty people off of Vinalhaven, it would be an idyllic paradise," Landers says. "I mean, that's just the reality of it." He says he knew he hadn't been the best cop for the island and that in retrospect he should have been "harder-handed," particularly when it came to Roger. He calls Roger a "transient" and says that those who jumped to conclusions about his killing were "numbskulls" and "idiots." "Frankly," he says, "not to be offensive, they're just not sophisticated enough to understand the reality of the facts."

Landers served in Iraq and Afghanistan and says he used to keep a ledger to count the dead bodies he'd seen but stopped after 450. He says he's desensitized, that he still has photos of Roger's body on his phone, that he's looked at them "a thousand times," and that his stint on Vinalhaven was "worse for me personally" than any of his overseas tours, particularly by the end of it. He says that in the weeks after Roger's death, everyone kept filming him on their cell phones, even during traffic stops. "It was actually kind of hostile. Suddenly I was like the devil for some reason," he says. "One thing the Iraqis weren't doing is they weren't, like, calling my mom names on social media."

As for the investigation, he says he was impressed by the detectives, and he had no reason to believe that they hadn't done their due diligence. Maine has hardly any murders, after all, and the major-crimes unit prides itself on its high clearance rate. He allows that it was possible that they were in a hurry to get off the island. "I mean, maybe they were all super tired," he says. "They could also have been like, 'We want to get the heck out of Vinalhaven.' I've been there myself."

And yet this past summer, Landers did go back to that place—not to Vinalhaven itself, Lord no, but to North Haven, across the thoroughfare. His old home. At the Rockland ferry terminal, he walked across the gray parking lot and waited for the boat. The Vinalhaven boats are hulking white ships with hulls painted deep red and dark blue. He boarded the smaller ferry that makes the North Haven trip three times a day, the way he had countless times before. The ship blew its horn, as it always did. The thrusters churned, and slowly the boat slid away from the dock and into the Atlantic, picking up speed, past the breakwater and the lighthouses, the mansions lining the coast, past the fishing boats with the seagulls diving and swooping after them, and out toward the islands: beautiful and rough, peaceful and wild. The mainland grew smaller and smaller behind him, until after a while it was just a bumpy line along the horizon—the tidy bustle of downtown Rockland, the other towns beyond, the highway, and the cities and mountains for thousands of miles beyond that reduced to abstraction. And then, by the time the boat entered the channel that weaves through the islands, the mainland, and the rest of the world, had disappeared altogether.

HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE MY FOX NEWS PARENTS

(continued from page 44)

mation from the two creatures who stalk our dreams and therapists' couches. For so many of my friends in their forties, no achievement has been sanctified until their parents have signed off and thereby made it real. But for so many of them, that affirmation will never come, in the same way that the Arizona election results will not be reversed and their parents' beloved Trump will not be reinstated in office. This is not a Hollywood movie where reconciliation, enlightenment, and closure can be attained. This is *The Sopranos,* where the same thing repeats itself over and over until (spoiler alert) the screen conclusively fades to black.

Of course, there is one thing that immigrant parents can do better than native-born Fox News parents: save money. If any advice from my parents has mattered, it is on how to remain solvent, even when pursuing a liberal-arts career. A friend of mine recalls that after I bought my first apartment, a dilapidated one-bedroom on the Lower East Side, my mother marched in "looking like a communist worker with that kerchief in her hair" and, using her willpower and several strategic bottles of vodka, managed to browbeat a small team of Eastern Europeans into renovating the place for the price of several so-so dinners down on Grand Street. And today, I still save money like a crazed just-off-the-boat immigrant, walking hundreds of blocks instead of taking the subway or, God forbid, an Uber. Which leads me to the most difficult part of any parental decoupling: the fact that your parents live on inside you no matter what kind of relationship you have with them in real life.

And so the holidays might be a time of listening to their Foxy rants with a mysterious half smile on your lips and a faraway look in your eyes (though my own family is pretty holiday averse, and I tend to huddle with some friends and a small turkey out in the countryside). What they're saying may be repellent, but ask yourself: How much of their anger and helplessness is permanently cached in you like an authoritarian mini parent in full uniform directing Pyongyang traffic or scaling the walls of our Capitol? Every time you share a kindness with a friend, treat them how a good parent would, by sewing them a wallet or helping them start a pass-through corporation for their new hipster wallet business; that way, you are shrinking that little dictatorial parent inside you. And then when your actual parents give you outrageous, useless advice, or fail to vaccinate themselves because Tucker Carlson said so, or send you on a path toward a career that hasn't been around since 1987, instead of reacting to them with anger, you can harness the one emotion that is called for. You can respond to them with the sorrow they so richly deserve.

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For the items featured in Esquire, please consult the website or call the phone number provided.

Blueprint, p. 29: C.P. Company **jacket,** cpcompany.com. **P. 30:** Omega **watch,** omegawatches.com. **P. 32:** Dries Van Noten **coat,** driesvannoten-la.com. Ermenegildo Zegna **parka,** zegna.com. **P. 34:** BTFL Studio **coat,** btflstudio.com. Prada **coat,** prada.com. 4SDesigns **coat,** 4sdesigns.com. Begg x Co **beanie,** beggxco.com. Gabriela Hearst **beanie,** gabrielahearst.com. COS **beanie,** cosstores.com. Alex Mill **beanie,** alexmill.com. **P. 36:** L.L. Bean **socks,** llbean.com. Chamula **sweater,** nomanwalksalone.com. Lee **jeans,** lee.com. Jacques Marie Mage **sunglasses,** jacquesmariemage.com. Schott NYC **jacket,** schottnyc.com. Carhartt WIP **jacket,** carhartt-wip.com. Blackstock & Weber **loafers,** blackstockandweber.com. **P. 38:** Johnny Nelson **ring,** johnnynelson.nyc. Tiffany & Co. Tiffany 1837 Makers **ring** and Paloma's Melody **ring,** tiffany.com. The Crown Collection **ring,** thecrown-collection.com. Chrome Hearts Plus & Bone **ring,** Spacer **ring,** and SBT Band **ring,** chromehearts.com. Third Crown **ring,** thirdcrown.com. VEERT **ring,** itsveert.com. Vintage Navajo **ring,** vickiturbeville.com. Cartier diamond **ring** and 18K rose-gold **ring,** cartier.com. Eyeba **ring,** eyeba.com. M. Cohen **ring,** mcohendesigns.com. Birthright Foundry **ring,** birthrightfoundry.com. Khiry **ring,** khiry.com.

Young & Restless, p. 94: Gucci **jacket, overalls,** and **sweater,** gucci.com. Danner **boots,** danner.com. Degs & Sal **bracelet,** degsandsal.com. Title of Work **bracelet,** mesh **ring,** and hinged **ring,** titleofwork.com. John Hardy **ring,** johnhardy.com. **P. 95:** Herno Globe **jacket,** herno.com. Versace **sweater,** versace.com. **P. 96:** CELINE by Hedi Slimane **jacket, sweater,** and **leggings,** celine.com. Title of Work **bracelet** and **ring,** titleofwork.com. Degs & Sal **bracelet** and **ring,** degsandsal.com. Dolce & Gabbana **sweater, shorts,** and **scarf,** dolcegabbana.com. Birkenstock **sandals** and **socks,** birkenstock.com. **P. 97:** Hermès **jacket, vest,** and **joggers,** hermes.com. Birkenstock **sandals,** birkenstock.com. American Trench **socks,** americantrench.com. Title of Work **bracelet** and **necklace,** titleofwork.com. Degs & Sal **bracelet,** degsandsal.com. Prada **jumpsuit** and **sweater,** prada.com. Calvin Klein **tank,** calvinklein.com. **P. 98:** Fendi **jacket, sweater,** and **shorts,** fendi.com. Chamula **hat,** chamulaoriginal.com. Hermès **boots,** hermes.com. American Trench **socks,** americantrench.com. Hestra **gloves,** hestragloves.us. **P. 99:** Herno Globe **jacket,** herno.com. Herno **vest,** herno.com. Versace **sweater, shorts,** and **scarf,** versace.com. John Hardy **ring,** johnhardy.com. Calvin Klein **tank,** calvinklein.com. **P. 100:** Greg Lauren **puffer jacket, work jacket,** and **trousers,** greglauren.com. Dior Men **cardigan,** dior.com. Filson **socks,** filson.com. Title of Work mesh **ring** and hinged **ring,** titleofwork.com. John Hardy **ring,** johnhardy.com. **P. 101:** Boss **jacket,** hugoboss.com. Moncler Collection **sweater,** moncler.com. Palm Angels x Missoni **shorts,** missoni.com. Missoni **balaclava,** missoni.com. Missoni **gloves,** 212-517-9339. Timberland **boots,** timberland.com. Pantherella **socks,** pantherella.com. Title of Work **bracelets, necklace,** mesh **ring,** and hinged **ring,** titleofwork.com. Degs & Sal **bracelets** and **ring,** degsandsal.com. Aknvas **sweater** and **trousers,** aknvas.com. Brunello Cucinelli **shirt,** brunellocucinelli.com. Calvin Klein **tank,** calvinklein.com. Isabel Marant **hat,** isabelmarant.com. Anonymous Ism **socks,** anonymousism.com. John Hardy **ring,** johnhardy.com.

Esquire (ISSN 0194-9535) is published monthly in March and September, bimonthly in April/May and October/November, and trimonthly in December/January/February and June/July/August by Hearst, 300 West 57th St., NY, NY 10019 USA. Steven R. Swartz, President and Chief Executive Officer; William R. Hearst III, Chairman; Frank A. Bennack, Jr., Executive Vice-Chairman. Hearst Magazine Media, Inc.: Debi Chirichella, President, Hearst Magazines Group, and Treasurer; John A. Rohan, Jr., Senior Vice President, Finance; Catherine A. Bostron, Secretary. © 2021 by Hearst Magazine Media, Inc. All rights reserved. Esquire, Man at His Best, Dubious Achievement Awards, The Sound and the Fury, and ♡ are registered trademarks of Hearst Communications, Inc. Periodicals postage paid at N.Y., N.Y., and additional entry post offices. Canada Post International Publications mail product (Canadian distribution) sales agreement no. 40012499. Editorial and Advertising Offices: 300 West 57th St., NY, NY 10019-3797. Send returns (Canada) to Bleuchip International, P.O. Box 25542, London, Ontario N6C 6B2. Subscription prices: United States and possessions, $7.97 a year; Canada and all other countries, $19.97 a year. Subscription services: Esquire will, upon receipt of a complete subscription order, undertake fulfillment of that order so as to provide the first copy for delivery by the Postal Service or alternate carrier within four to six weeks. From time to time, we make our subscriber list available to companies that sell goods and services by mail that we believe would interest our readers. If you would rather not receive such mailings via postal mail, please send your current mailing label or an exact copy to Mail Preference Service, P.O. Box 6000, Harlan, IA 51593. You can also visit preferences.hearstmags.com to manage your preferences and opt out of receiving marketing offers by e-mail. For customer service, changes of address, and subscription orders, log on to service.mag.com or write to Customer Service Department, Esquire, P.O. Box 6000, Harlan, IA 51593. Esquire is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or art. None will be returned unless accompanied by return postage and envelope. Canada BN NBR 10231 0943 RT. Postmaster: Please send address changes to Esquire, P.O. Box 6000, Harlan, IA 51593. Printed in the USA.

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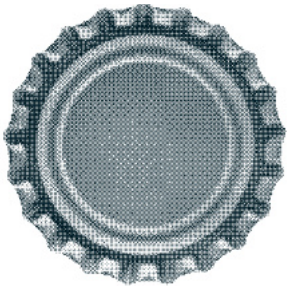
The First Half of a Beer



THE SOUND OF cracking open a cold one is among the greatest of all time: *tccccckkk-haaa*. It's the start of the weekend, the kickoff, the flipping of the clock from 4:59 to 5:00 P.M. It's the sweet sound of freedom that precedes your first refreshing sip of beer.

Ahhhhh. There's nothing quite like it, right? The frothy overflow of a just-poured draft, the first few gulps of ice-cold, hoppy ale running down your throat. Fizzy, foamy, frosty, crisp.

But nothing gold can stay. You get carried away with the chip bowl, or go to the bathroom, or get caught up in telling a story and forget about your drink for a couple minutes. Your clammy hand wraps around your pint for a bit too long. It's a little warmer and a little flatter than it was at the start. It's not your fault that nature's first green is gold, her hardest hue to hold. It's another casualty of the passage of time: The quintessential thirst-quenching beverage—one that puts even blue Gatorade to shame—is now just a bunch of warm liquid.

The first half of a beer is why we drink beer. The second half is an afterthought at best, backwash at worst. If you were to watch all the beer commercials from the beginning of time, you'd hear the words *cold* and *refreshing* over and over and over. That's because marketing people aren't that creative, and also because that's what sells beer. No one drinks beer for the tepid second half. It's Target to Walmart, Slack to Microsoft Teams. They serve the same purpose, sure, the first and the second halves of your beer. But they don't even compare.

All right, relax, you in the back. Yes, workable solutions exist for this problem, but they pose their own set of challenges. Such as: drinking a pony-sized bottle of beer (but where does one buy these?) or ordering a flight so you are served only five first halves (but what if we aren't at a craft brewery?). Far more common are the anti-solutions, such as the tallboy and the nightmarish stein. Don't let Oktoberfest distract you with its beer cheese from its giant warm-beer crimes.

None of these are acceptable solutions! Blessedly, we have one.

When you look down at your glass, half empty, with condensation dripping down its sides, don't summon your freshman-year-of-college powers and slug it like you're about to take home flip cup for the team. Don't just get it over with.

Get yourself another first half of a beer.

From here on out—and we mean this—we don't care what you do with the second half of your beer. Pour it down the drain. Send it back. "Accidentally" knock it over. Water the plants with it. Put out a fire. Give it to the dog. Beer-batter some fish. Hand it to the person complaining that you drink too slowly. Pour it into an inflatable kiddie pool so that one day, eventually, you'll have a small pool full of beer. Whatever you gotta do to get another beer in front of you, so you can *tccccckkk-haaa* that fresh can and relive the rush of the first half all over again.

TRUNK ARCHIVE (MAIN IMAGE). SHUTTERSTOCK (BEER).

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